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GERMAN CULTURE

AND

CHRISTIANITY:

THEIR CONTROVERSY IN THE TIME 1770—1880.

BY

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P R E F A C E.

ERRORS widely spread by telling only certain parts of a story, are sometimes best corrected when the other parts are told. The remark—trite enough—may perhaps be tolerated here, since it serves to indicate the general intention of the chapters following. They are intended to tell, in its own sequence, the whole story of the movement that began in deism and has ended in atheism. Already some knowledge of rationalism and its results has been widely spread among the educated classes; partly also among those who may be called illiterate. The books most negative in their tendency have, in several instances, been aided by their levity—as regards both substance and style—and consequently they have obtained a considerable popularity in England, as on the continent. Their reasonings are easily understood; and they flatter our pride. Their main principle is readily accepted as an axiom—nothing greater or mightier than our own understanding has been or ever can be revealed, so as to demand our faith and adoration.

This was the axiom of the deism that—more than a hundred years ago—was largely exported from England and spread on the continent, especially in Prussia and some neighbouring districts. As accepted there, and afterwards aided by destructive biblical criticism, English deism was

known as rationalism ; and this name—sometimes limited—fairly applies to the whole movement of which an account is to be given. It has passed through these three chief phases :—the deistic, already named ; the ethic ; and the quasi-philosophical. It is the second phase that is most largely noticed in the chapters following (especially cc. 5-9)—and with good reason we would submit ; for this is indeed the most reverent and thoughtful form in which a proposed rejection of Christianity has ever been considered.

Can the world go on without a revealed religion ?—"No." This is in substance the answer given, directly or indirectly, by such men as Lessing, Herder, Jacobi, Kant, Fichte, Schelling and Hegel. Their "no" may possibly have some weight, when placed in opposition to the "yes" rather boldly pronounced by certain representatives of our latest science—that which is usually called "positivism." In passing there may be briefly noticed the fact—that just in proportion as men have been led to higher views of ethics, they have been led also to entertain more respectful views of revealed religion. This general fact is made clear throughout the whole course of the controversy. Let the sequences of its several phases be noticed ; let facts be stated completely ; and rationalism itself must say something in behalf of the faith that it would destroy. The concessions that have been made by unbelievers are remarkable.

When a fact is given, let its sequel also be noticed. Take for example Lessing's case. He helped in the spread of negation ; and the deists of his time claimed him as their friend. On the other hand, he had but little respect for their moral character, and hardly disguised his general contempt of their intellectual attainments. To say the

least, he had grave misgivings respecting the issue of the movement to which he had lent his aid ; and the rest of his life was partly devoted to the study of such questions as these :—How was the Church created, and so soon established in the Roman world ? By means of writings more or less falsified, you say. But it was created and spread widely before the time when those records were written. And how—supposing them to have been falsified—did they agree so well in preserving one ethical character, the purest, holiest ever made known ; that which remains now the light of the world ?—In form these questions were often varied, and Lessing—always an inquirer as regards his faith—proposed other queries, here and there mentioned in the following work ; but this, his first question, is that chiefly held in view.

How was the Church created ? This is the question to which the latest form of rationalism—Baur's construction of "ideas" and "tendencies"—has vainly attempted to give a reasonable or even a probable answer. Unless some real force is found, adequate for the production of an effect or movement so vast and still—after all defects caused by errors ; above all by divisions among Christians—still so far surpassing all known effects of combinations merely human—unless some cause is discovered at least equal to this effect—the Church, and all the work she has done in the civilization of the world—it will be useless to go on writing of "myths," "ideas," "tendencies" and "periods," or "epochs favourable to evolution," as if any one of these or all of them put together could live and act ; could take the place of a living Saviour, one whose will has shown itself strong enough to attract to Himself all the souls who have ever belonged to his Church. Wherever, in the pages

following, the theory of "myths and tendencies" is named, it will be well to bear in mind such facts as these:—that the Church of Christ was created, and had even made itself dreaded "by Judaism," at the time of St. Paul's conversion; secondly, that within the space of twenty-five years after the "Resurrection," the Church was established firmly in Jerusalem, Rome, Corinth and Galatia, where all Christians accepted "the same Gospel" that was preached by St. Paul; thirdly that, about the close of the first century, the same Gospel was declared by St. Clement of Rome, as the faith then commonly accepted by all who called themselves Christians. It will be obvious, that the facts here briefly named are but fair examples of others. On these must be based the historical argument chiefly required in the present day, when the notions of Baur and his followers are so often repeated. That argument cannot be elaborated in the present work; which may nevertheless serve here and there to suggest the character of the evidence chiefly required at the present day.*

* It was originally intended that the remarks on "Christian Evidences" given in the nineteenth of the chapters following, should be expanded in a final chapter, showing more clearly the order of an argument based on the concordant testimony of the Early Church. In *outline* the argument to be given in a twentieth chapter was written some years ago, and the author then imagined that it might be viewed as one especially his own. In October, 1881, he read for the first time the two volumes mentioned below, containing an elaborate and powerful argument, also based on the concordance of various testimonies. In the largeness and thoroughness of their plan, and in the multitude of their special evidences, united so as to meet inevitably in one conclusion—the historical validity of the Gospel—these volumes are utterly superior to everything designed in the outline above named; yet the argument they suggest is substantially

Lessing's is not a solitary example of hesitation and misgiving as symptoms attending and following negative or destructive reasonings. Many other facts might be cited, to show how men classed with rationalists have been more or less misrepresented by writers on the negative side. Herder, for example—who long ago suggested the notion of evolution now so popular—was a nondescript in his mixture of belief and unbelief, who surrendered slowly the faith that had cheered his earlier life. Kant, Fichte and Jacobi—men alike morally respectable—endeavoured to maintain the independence of ethics; but all three confessed their failure. This remarkable fact has been for the most part suppressed; especially by Carlyle, who has said so much about the earlier moral teaching of Kant and Fichte. The former said, indeed, that morality ought not to need the aid of religion; but later he confessed, that it *did* urgently require such aid. The latter—Fichte—virtually recanted; he in fact abolished all the independent moral philosophy of his earlier years! These important facts are ignored by Carlyle. Were they unknown? However that might be, he went on in his own way—leaving revelation in silence, and earnestly preaching moral independence; and the end of it all was laudation of despotism and slavery! For this teaching Fichte is certainly not responsible.

the same. It is a remarkable case of coincidence; but not the first of the kind. It should be carefully observed, that the coincidence here noted relates to nothing further than a general design. The writer of the outline claims for himself nothing even remotely like such thorough work as may be found in the two volumes here named:—

"The Jesus of the Evangelists: his historical character vindicated."
By the Rev. C. A. Row.

"Christian Evidences viewed in relation to modern thought."
(Bampton Lectures, 1877.) By the same Author.

If further examples of misrepresentation are required, they may be readily given. No attempt is made here to define the faith held by Goethe and Schiller ; but this may be said—their unbelief has sometimes been described in terms requiring qualification. In their later writings are found indications of an increasing reverence in relation to the doctrines and the moral claims of Christianity. A widespread improvement in the religious tone of literature took place in the early years of the present century. Intellectual pride was subdued, and a higher ethical character was developed, in that time of national adversity. Once more the existence of the Christian faith was recognized, in poetry, general literature, and philosophy. As a rule, the men who fought well at that time were not scoffers. These are facts to be remembered.

The mysticism of the time led men to a new system of philosophy—one that recognized in religion the presence of ideas that should be called divine. For everything positive, as reproduced in its moral and religious teaching, philosophy was now indebted to the Church. It is true, that on one side of the system was developed the latest form of negation. Was this founded at first on a one-sided and erroneous understanding of Schelling's main principle? He said so ; and for saying this, he—the author of the philosophy—was himself denounced as a retrogressive teacher ; but that question still remains open. Schelling's latest teaching—put into words that may be readily understood—is tantamount to this : Divine truth is not abstract, but is ideal and real, ethical and human, in the highest sense ; the world's history has included a gradual revelation of divine truth, and of this the climax is a personal manifestation of perfect holiness, and a self-sacrifice demanding

the faith and obedience of mankind. For such teaching as this Schelling was bitterly persecuted.

There are topics suggested by the title "German Culture," yet left mostly unnoticed in the following pages. Hardly a word is said of the union of Church and State as existing in Prussia. The fact is, that union has consequences too important to be noticed briefly; and this may be said especially of the question known as the "Kulturkampf" of recent years. But little is said respecting the materialism of our own times. The teaching so called opposes itself, not especially to any Christian tenet, but to every thought of a religious nature, and indeed to the moral conscience of mankind. It is but fair to add, that—so far as its advanced teaching is concerned—the materialism now popular should hardly be called German.

Lastly, but little is said respecting the ground for unbelief afforded by actual divisions of Christians, seen as existing on the continent. Every reader who is but moderately well acquainted with the facts of religious and political life in Germany must appreciate the motives of our reserve on this topic. Our divisions in England are sufficiently painful, and present serious obstacles to the spread of practical religion; but here—though we are still called insular and illiberal in certain respects—we have at least learned enough to make obsolete the error of persecution.

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GERMAN CULTURE AND CHRISTIANITY.

CHAPTER I.

LIMITATIONS.

GERMAN CULTURE and CHRISTIANITY are words indicating studies so extensive, that already large libraries are filled with their results. These studies may be reduced to the form of one inquiry, when we ask: how far are we indebted for our culture, on one side to German energy, on the other to Christian freedom? Thus limited, however, the inquiry is still one having a vast range, not easily defined; and it is named here only, by means of a wide contrast, to make clear the intention of certain limitations, strictly observed in the chapters following. Their range is limited as regards the time—1770-1880—during which the controversy to be described has been carried on. This time includes the classic period of German literature, and has been so prolific in polemical as well as in general literature—especially philosophical, biblical and theological—that other limitations must also be strictly observed, if an account of the controversy is to be made compendious.

In the next place, then, disputes purely or mostly ecclesiastical must be excluded. This limitation is not arbitrary, but one belonging to the general character and the range of the controversy itself, which, as here defined, began in the time of Lessing. The same limitation, excluding ecclesiastical questions, would remain correct if, to make a

beginning, we travelled back as far as the time when Semler—a student at Halle—was beginning his long course of multifarious reading in theology. The innovations afterwards largely extended by his numerous publications—about one hundred and seventy—led on to extreme negation, and to controversy; but the dispute was (for the most part) not one concerning the peculiar tenets of any one church or confession, as arrayed in opposition to those of another. On the contrary, disputation arose out of changes of opinion and belief that had taken place in the minds of many Protestants—both Lutheran and Reformed—respecting the substance of their own belief, and especially relating to their common and central tenet, once firmly maintained by the two confessions. About the middle of the eighteenth century, the two confessions were dwelling together on terms so amicable, that it might be fairly said of them, the leopard lay down beside the lamb. The only sectarian dispute of the time was one begun by an illiberal attack made on the doctrines and practical lives of the United Brethren, sometimes called “Moravians.”

Out of the quietude of this period arose, and spread rapidly, the unbelief called “old rationalism;” and its earliest and most prominent representatives were found among the pastors of the two Protestant confessions. They were men intelligent enough to see that the movement which they so zealously aided must, if successful, end in the destruction of that religion to which they owed their own position, and their privilege of studious leisure. Apparently, however, it was their firm belief that with perfect success, and until the end of the world, the State would continue to appoint, and the people would be willing to obey, a succession of pastors and teachers—nominally Christian pastors—whose belief had dwindled down to an abstract and inert formula rightly called “deism,” and precisely equivalent in moral worth to the formula of Robespierre:—“il y a un être suprême.” Respecting any moral relations which might be supposed as existing between that uttermost

abstraction and this real world, with all its sins, sufferings, and mysteries of good and evil, nothing whatever was told more than this:—the world was created by the Supreme Being.

The obvious objection that may here be made, is not to be neglected, though it is founded on error. The deists, we are told, reduced the Christian religion to a system of morals, and thus, it may be supposed, they still retained some true knowledge of God, by whose authority that system of morals had been instituted. This is not a true conclusion. Their morals had no actual relation to divine authority; but were founded, almost invariably, on self-interest well understood; that is to say, on prudent egoism. In the contest of the senses against the soul, their final authority to be consulted was always their own “enlightened understanding;” in plain English, just the same common sense that we employ every day, every hour, in our matters of ordinary business—say, for example, in affairs of common law. Here is really contained the whole philosophy of the more advanced writers called deists; otherwise called “popular philosophers,” and here is also the philosophy of the “old rationalists,” who, in North Germany, were so active, in their own destructive way, during the latter half of the eighteenth century. It is not forgotten that other destructive writers, essentially belonging to the same class, lived in the earlier half of the same hundred years, and that these again had their preceding teachers, who lived in the latter half of the seventeenth century. These facts—to be more distinctly noticed in another place—are named here, only to show the breadth or general scope of the controversy introduced by the “deists,” or “old rationalists,” and made more definite by Lessing.

The way in which Lessing made the controversy more definite must now be noticed. His master-thought—more clearly developed by later writers, especially by Hegel—is this:—our highest thought of mankind, as regards their need of, and their capacity for receiving a divine revelation,

and our highest thought of God, as freely and largely giving to mankind a revelation of his own mind and will: these thoughts, taken together, constitute our only possible true or most adequate concept of a revealed religion. Is the Christian religion one to be accepted as corresponding with that, our highest and most comprehensive idea of revelation?

Lessing does not immediately answer this question in the affirmative, but he goes on to show, that revelation for mankind—like education for an individual—must be gradual, and then he shows how the Christian faith has, for nearly two thousand years, appeared as one very important part of a vast gradual revelation, of which the final issue is unknown. Here the general scope of the question, and its reverent tone, serve at once to put between Lessing and all frivolous writers of Dr. Bahrdt's school a moral distance feebly represented by talking of millions of leagues. Here then is the true beginning of the controversy to be studied. Here is the line of division, where we leave the sweeping negations and the gross irreverence of "old rationalism," and come face to face with the problem of modern religious philosophy. Is Christianity to be regarded as a great transitional movement, in a vast and gradual process, by which God is making known his own mind and will, while mankind, in proportionate degrees, are learning more and more how to think and act rightly, as regards their relations toward God, and their duties toward one another and the world at large? Or is Christianity to be accepted as the absolute and final revelation of God?—This is the question, and its importance for every man is so great, that it must be put as clearly as possible. The main idea of Lessing's theory is, therefore, here treated briefly, in the way of analysis.

All men speak, in a physical sense, of the heavens and the earth. They look down on the latter and up to the former, and clearly understand that they are set apart. At the same time, it is equally sure that they exist in union.

All that here below seems separately fixed and independent is, every moment, dependent on the same regulated forces that preserve "the stars from wrong;" on the same living laws under whose control the heavens, with all their hosts, remain "fresh and strong." Distance does not destroy union; but union is more powerfully, more expansively, made manifest by means of distance.

So Lessing thinks of the active union ever maintained, by means of diversity, between the finite and the infinite—between mankind, ever striving, learning, making progress, and God, ever resting in his own infinite activity, ever teaching, guiding, imparting to men more and more knowledge of Himself, and of their own true nature and destiny. On one side of Lessing's concept we have the notion of revelation, on the other, the notion of man's capacity for accepting a revelation. Here capacity is not to be understood in a passive sense. Not for a moment is it to be supposed that revelation is to be imparted, as rain is made to fall upon an inactive and senseless rock. For the revelation to be granted, man must first make earnest inquiry. It is to the feeble hand, lifted up, that the stronger hand is extended, to give the aid required. As man strives on, and in striving prays for aid, so God gives the aid required, and the strength to go on, gaining increase of capacity to accept more and more knowledge of God.

These are the two sides of Lessing's concept of revelation—two sides ever clearly distinct from each other, never separated. Man, as Lessing implies, is ever seeking union with God, while God is ever willing to impart to the religious and progressive mind a knowledge of divine truth. By what medium?—This is the question that next arises.

"By a series of prophets and teachers." This is Lessing's reply.

After the revelation granted to the ancient people of Israel, whose records are contained in the Old Testament, Christ appeared as a teacher of higher truth and more

spiritual moral doctrine, enforced by better motives than those which had been formerly supplied by promises and threatenings of secular rewards and punishments. Records of his own words and actions, followed by several epistles and other writings by his early followers, constitute the New Testament, a second elementary book issued for the teaching of mankind, a book that now for many centuries has served better than all other books to enlighten the minds of men. This fact will remain true, even if it be granted that it is the light of their own highest reason that shines forth, as with a new radiance, reflected from the pages of that book.

For a time [a very long time?] this elementary book, the New Testament, must serve as an indispensable and insuperable standard for the moral guidance of mankind. And those who esteem themselves advanced thinkers should take care not to let their own supposed superiority appear too oppressively, or so as to bewilder and discourage their weaker or less-advanced fellow-students. Students of the highest class should rather make use of the same standard, and moreover may, possibly with some advantage, consider the question:—Have we ourselves hitherto studied and understood deeply enough all that is recorded in this book?

In passing, it may be noticed how well this view of a gradual and progressive revelation accords with a well-known leading trait in the writer's own character. He does not ask for a repose like that of "nirvana," but takes care to leave room for exertion, inquiry, and expectation. "It is not possession," he says, "but earnest quest of truth that expands our powers of mind. Possession makes us peaceful, slothful and proud. If God held forth in his right hand the truth itself, in his left the ever-during pursuit of truth, and said, 'Choose,'—then, with risk of always remaining liable to error, I would humbly take the left, and say, 'Give me this, Father, for absolute truth belongs to Thee alone.'"

Obviously, dangerous and restless error may be con-

nected with such energetic love of research and progression. There may surely be work enough still found in the duty of expanding the periphery of a religion, while the centre is left in "in a repose that always is the same." All that is positive and edifying in Lessing's notion of a progressive revelation, where the medium is a series of teachers, may be predicated of the Christian religion, while one Mediator remains the centre of a boundless possible expansion. Lessing himself implies that Christianity is not destined to fall into the abyss of drear negation. Life conquers life; but death will not conquer life. And, however baffled and insulted from time to time by men—they still exist—belonging to the school of Dr. Bahrdt, the religion that has seen empires fade away will not fall at the bidding of any lower powers. Christianity has been a light that, through all the mists of nearly two thousand years, has been shining on, and—if for a moment it may be supposed that this light must some day fade away—it will fade and die slowly, as the twilight of dawn loses itself in the clear shining of open day. The revelation—to speak still in accordance with Lessing's idea—will be neither refuted nor destroyed, but will be absorbed in the fulness of a greater revelation. Will it not be soon enough to speak of such a change when the greater revelation shows some signs of its appearance? Is our own period such a time? Where is there a twinkling ray of that coming, clearer light?

That later German writers on the philosophy of religion have, for the most part, retained as true, and have more or less expanded, the idea above defined, will be shown in later chapters, describing the systems of Kant, Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel, so far as they relate to Christianity. To say the least that is positive respecting the general tone of their writings—they denote some return toward a respectful consideration of Christianity; it would hardly be too much to say, that philosophy herself has assumed something like a penitential bearing, suggesting a wish to make, if possible, some little reparation for the untold

insults that, on all sides, were hurled against the Cross, by the ghastly irreverence of the eighteenth century.

It is not suggested that the work of the eighteenth century has been altogether undone, or that philosophy and religion are now dwelling together in peace. It is true that in Germany speculation is less irreverent; but religious philosophy is not religion. Religion must grasp, and hold in firm union, faith in a substance unseen and true, and this faith, as a living spirit, must pervade and control our whole existence, intellectual, social, and natural. Religion is for "all men," and it follows, that its appeal to the conscience must be clear, self-evident, commanding. This is the basis assumed in the Christian religion, and if the basis itself is found infirm, the more thoughtful and tolerant bearing of philosophical inquiry will not suffice to support a failing faith.

If it must be granted that in our time faith has failed to a very large extent, it must be equally clear that the main cause of failure has not been intellectual. As to the vast majority of all classes, men are neither critics nor philosophers. Christianity, if waning, has not been refuted. What, then, have been the main causes of so much failure? The duty of giving a reply to this most serious inquiry is not ours. The question is named here merely in order to suggest some fair consideration of the limits within which impartiality may be reasonably expected as regards the narrative and analytical chapters that follow. Indifference respecting the issue of the question itself is not professed; but it is submitted that, when a writer's views and sentiments as regards the question itself are simply remote from, but not in a definitely polemical way opposed to, those of any of the combatants on the one side or on the other, then the whole story of their contest may surely be told with some fair approach to impartiality. It is granted, that apparent exceptions to the rule of impartiality may be found in the chapter on "Old Rationalism," which serves as an introduction to the notice of Lessing; but it should be

observed that with his coming into the field the true religious inquiry begins, and that the tone of discussion is henceforth, for the most part, so far improved, that where it is not precisely Christian, it is at least urbane and respectable. An accordant transition of tone will be found, it is hoped, in the treatment of Lessing's views; and it is intended that other able and thoughtful writers, worthy of being classed as his followers, shall be treated with much deference, while their opinions are coldly analyzed.

The question urged by the self-confident deists who wrote near the close of the eighteenth century was this:—"Does Christianity accord everywhere so well with our common sense that we are bound to accept it?"—and their ready answer was, "No."

Lessing's chief questions respecting religion may be put briefly in words like these:—"May not Christianity be rightly viewed as an authoritative revelation from God?—as a revelation of which the moral substance is undeniably good, while the records are, on the whole, strongly supported by history? Granted that difficulties, exciting doubt, are found in some parts of the records—is not the revelation mainly one inviting our reasonable acceptance; requiring only such subordination of our understanding as must be demanded by a revelation of this character? Is the truth that God has revealed to us in and through Christ to be viewed barely in our own intellectual light? Has it not light and evidence in itself? Has it not power as well as clearness? Has it not, like the sun, warmth as well as light?"

Such questions are enough to tell us that the great critic, when truly at home, and holding converse with his own heart, was living far away from the scoffers of his age. So Hegel describes the intellectual position of his great predecessor.

The most important limitation of our inquiry has been marked: it is Lessing's question that is chiefly to be considered. But since his time, both philosophical and historical

inquiries respecting the evidences and the authority of Christianity have shown a tendency toward making the question still more definite. It has been felt, more and more, that our general willingness to accept a doctrine and rule of life including—as Christianity surely does—“some things hard to be understood,” must be strongly affected by our belief respecting the person of the Mediator. To pass over an earlier time—to which, however, the remark might as truly apply—since 1835, when Strauss published his first “Life of Jesus,” the later controversy has been one in which several minor questions have been ably treated; but the main conflict has been one in which disputants have been more and more closely gathering themselves together—whether for attack or for defence—and collecting their forces all around one point, one tenet respecting the answer to be given to the question: “Whom say ye that I am?”—Here is the central position of the defence; for here is the point against which the attack—masked at times by various auxiliary movements—has always been mainly directed.

This asserted centrality of the tenet mostly held in view throughout all the chapters following, remains true, of course, when we regard the ancient and most comprehensive form of the doctrine, as preserved in the Nicene Creed, and held as orthodox by a large majority of all men called Christians; but the assertion of centrality also remains true, as regards the less positive views of rationalists, of the old school, and the new. If proofs of this position were demanded, the only difficulty would be to select such as may be named most briefly. Here is one:—Since 1835, when Strauss published his first “Life of Jesus,” more than twenty German works on the same subject have appeared.

A central tenet is one that serves as the keystone in an arch. This was clearly enough understood by Reimarus, in 1764, and of course was as clearly seen by Strauss in 1862, when he published a biography of his chief predecessor. He threatened then that, if his theory of a mythical gospel was not accepted, he should find himself driven to go back

to the position held by Reimarus; *i.e.* that Christianity was originally a deliberate imposition. This conditional threatening was, in truth, a clear logical prevision of his conclusion, almost reached in 1864, when his reconstructed work, the "Life of Jesus," appeared, and the conclusion was finally announced in 1872, when he published his book, "The Old Faith and the New." Here in reply to his own question "Am I a Christian?" he firmly answers, "No."

In accordance with the facts given, and many others of which they are but specimens, the inquiry to be noticed is chiefly to be viewed as one ever leading on toward an ultimate question respecting one tenet, rightly regarded as the central tenet of the Christian Religion. There is nothing arbitrary in the limitation of view that makes all other questions subordinate. Such limitation will, doubtless, to many, seem obviously accordant with both logic and history; yet it may be well to add here some indisputable evidences of its objective character. It is not the truth of the doctrine in question that is here affirmed, but its central position, as viewed at once by those who accept it, and by those who reject it. The following quotations are, therefore, borrowed from two German authors, whose religious opinions are mutually antagonistic in the extreme, and may here suffice as evidence. The former quotation is taken from the writings of Dr. Dorner, author of an elaborate historical treatise on Christology:—

"It is cheering," says he, "to observe how, in the long conflict between Christianity and reason, we are gradually becoming clearer in our common view of the main point in our disputation. This above all must engage our attention, if ever the warfare is to be ended. On both sides, the forces hitherto active in the conflict are gathering themselves now more closely around this one point—the central position, where the battle will be lost or won. It is more and more clearly seen, that the main question on which we are divided is simply this:—Can we, or can we not, accept as true this one central tenet which the Christian Church, in all ages, has on the whole steadfastly maintained, respecting the person of Christ? On both sides of our dispute it is advisable that attention should be concentrated here. For thus philosophy will see the position to be attacked, if a decisive

victory is to be won. Or, if there be, on the side of the attack, any inclination toward coming to terms of truce, philosophy will now foresee the character of the only conditions that can make it possible, on our part, to extend toward those once our foes a friendly hand . . . As parts are united in a living organism, so in the whole system of Christian doctrines, each article is united with every other article, and with the whole, while one tenet—this of which we have spoken—ever remains steadfast, as the centre of the system.”

The following quotation is from a writer—Hartmann—whose aim, as regards Christianity, is destructive. He thus, first of all, defines the central position held by Christology in the whole organism of those doctrines against which his subsequent negative criticism is directed :—

“Christology—the doctrine of Christ’s person and work—has to consider the question : how must we think of His person and work, so that He may be regarded as the one true Saviour of men, and His work as the work of man’s salvation? Dogmatic anthropology—defining our human nature, as regarded from a religious point of view—has to consider the question : how must the character of man be defined, as at once needing salvation, unable to save himself, yet capable of salvation by Christ? Next, Christology leads us on—though indirectly—to Trinitarian doctrine; and from a union of Christology with anthropology are consistently developed other Christian doctrines; one showing the way in which we must seek and find deliverance, another defining the intervention and aid of the Church in leading men to salvation. Thus the whole system of Christian teaching revolves around this one central tenet of salvation by Christ. It is the specific mark by which Christianity is made distinct from every other religion; the formative centre of all Christian doctrine; the very core of the Christian faith; in a word, the essence of Christianity. This is simply a matter of fact, not to be denied. From the time of the Early Church, down to our own days of liberal and speculative Protestantism [in Germany] the central position of Christology has remained unmoved, whatever the variations made in numerous expositions of the doctrine. When, therefore, we come to examine this one doctrine, we may rest assured, that the object of our study is nothing less than the inmost substance of Christianity itself.”

It is intended that the next two chapters, taken together, should serve as an historical introduction, and make more definite the position assumed by Lessing.

CHAPTER II.

DEISM.

NEAR the close of the seventeenth century there was published in England a small book, written by JOHN TOLAND (1669-1722), of which the positive teaching is usually called deism. Before that time there lived in England several deistic writers—*e.g.* HOBBS, sometimes erroneously called “an atheist”—but Toland is named here, chiefly because he was one of the writers to whom REIMARUS, a German deist, was indebted, as regards the general doctrine of deism. This, as expounded by English writers, was made the common basis of numerous German writers, whose substantial likeness in belief has been disguised by the use of many names; such as “enlightened men,” “popular philosophers,” “rationalists” and “neologists.” In the eighteenth century, these were all so many names for deists. On the side of negation, their likeness was obvious; for like Toland, they all rejected the “mysteries of Christianity.”

In the nineteenth century, we have many writers who agree well enough on their negative side, or alike reject “mysteries,” while in other respects they display learning and powers of mind such as were hardly dreamed of among “the old rationalists” and other deists of Germany, with whom LESSING ought not to be classed. As to their own positive views, the negative writers of our own time show much variety, and here and there originality. Their names, accordingly, are remarkably various, including such as these :

"atheists," "pantheists," "positivists," "agnostics," and "pessimists," with "liberal Protestants," "free theologians," and "speculative religionists." Still it may be safely asserted that old-fashioned deists are numerous. Among them, however, we have to notice only those in whose writings is found a clear historical continuity, extending from the days of Toland to the close of the eighteenth century.

A concise definition of deism will be expected only by those who hardly know how dangerous are abstract terms. One might say, the whole creed of deism is contained in Robespierre's proclamation: "il y a un être suprême;" but this could serve only as a misrepresentation. Accepted in a fair and historical sense, deism is a term denoting a widely spread and deeply-rooted growth of opinions respecting one question—the relation existing between man and the Supreme Being. In deistic writings belonging to the eighteenth century are found mostly these three articles of belief: (a) There is one God, the first cause of all things created, who is personal and intelligent; (b) his existence can be demonstrated by our understanding; (c) the created world shows evidences of design, by which we are led to a knowledge of his attributes: power, wisdom, and goodness. This—the general creed of deism, here divided into three parts—is found in numerous writings; but while the first article (a) has throughout been asserted, the second (b) has been less firmly maintained on the whole; and the third, the optimistic article (c), has in our day been subjected to much severe criticism, leading to pessimism, or to the general scepticism sometimes called agnosticism. Thus decline has taken place in a ratio indicated by the contents of the three articles: the third, asserting much that is interesting, has been called in question; the second has been less and less asserted; and the first has, in many instances, been deprived of its latter clause, ascribing to God personality and intelligence. With these diminutions, the creed is reduced to a very bare formula—every effect

has a cause. This bare residuum is not fairly and historically called deism.

It was the larger creed of deism, as above given, that in 1750-1800 was so widely spread in Germany and in France. In both cases it was an importation from England; but this fact should not be isolated, so as to leave unnoticed the other fact, that on the continent the minds of men had been well prepared to accept the new creed. In France deism and democracy made an alliance so intimate, that it would be scarcely possible to assign to each its proper share in the triumph that followed. All that was sure was, that deism had done nothing to stay the progress of the revolution.

In Germany, about the same time, orthodoxy had fallen with a rapidity reminding one of the capture of Jericho; and deism had spread itself with a speedy success, not unlike that enjoyed by Islam in the seventh century. But it should be remembered, that the repose immediately preceding the sudden decline, or say rather the fall of orthodoxy, had been a deceptive repose. The faith that once gave energy to Lutheranism had to a great extent decayed. The growth of deism was but the last stage of a chronic and internal disease.

In England the antecedents of deism—theological, ecclesiastical, and political—were so complex, that a very brief summary could serve only to misrepresent facts. One fact, however, is clear: the controversies of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were especially ecclesiastical, or where they were doctrinal, their general character was by far less rationalistic than the principles assumed on both sides during the latter deistic controversy. Here, on the side of the defence, there was shown, to a large extent, a disposition to meet the enemy on ground held in common by both parties, and this common ground was found in history. Asserted facts were divided into two classes, the probable and the improbable; and the latter were rejected. For a moment let it be supposed that the whole controversy was one relating to alleged events in the life of Julius

Cæsar. Did he come over to Britain? Why was his stay here so short? How did it lead to the later occupation under Claudius? These are questions that fairly represent the purely historical character of many discussions belonging to our English deistic controversy. In reading some parts of it, one cannot well avoid a suggestion that hardly seems to have vexed the minds of the deists, while it is but slightly noticed by their opponents, the apologists. Supposing the latter had gained a sure victory, or had compelled the deists to declare themselves historical converts, what would the gain have been, so far as the interests of religion were concerned?

To see clearly the extent of the ground ceded by the apologists, it may be well to name at least some of the positions chosen by more courageous champions. The New Testament affords examples of the true argument that may fairly be called primitive. Here a few leading facts are asserted, and it is boldly assumed that these are such as must appeal to the inmost conscience—the true or common conscience—of mankind. St. Paul, preaching on Mars' Hill, takes it for granted that some among his listeners are seekers after God. He is preaching to *men*, and this, says he, is the end for which *men* were created, that "they should seek the Lord, though He be not far from every one of us." Assuming that this must be admitted, he next preaches boldly "JESUS and the resurrection." To use modern terms—the "religious philosophy" of the apostle is this: the Christian faith is that for which all men are seeking; it is the religion of human nature. "They that deny a God destroy man's nobility" [his true development] says Lord Bacon, and further, as St. Paul more definitely asserts, they that reject the Gospel oppose themselves to the true evolution of their own human nature which, as his argument implies, is essentially religious—not to say Christian. In substance, the apostle's argument is identical with the best teaching of modern German apologists. This is the primitive way of asserting the truth of our religion,

and, after all the reasonings of eighteen centuries, it will in all probability be the last way. The evolution of humanity cannot be separated from our Christian faith.

The second way in which Christianity has been asserted and defended includes the first great argument employed by St. Paul; but adds another, founded on the existence and the success of the Christian Church. The truth has been asserted—that faith in Christ, with submission to his authority, is for mankind the sure way of liberation from sin and misery; it is now added, that witnesses to the truth of this Gospel are numerous. Christianity, as now preached and defended, is regarded, not as a mere doctrine, nor as a history, but as the continued life and work of Christ himself in his own Church. This principle supplies the argument called ecclesiastical. A word is hardly required to show that at the close of the seventeenth century such a mode of self-assertion and defence could not, in England, be employed with much hope of success, but might serve to revive the bitter controversy of recent time. Still it should be added that, without a word tending to revive that strife, the apologists might have made a larger use of undisputed historical records in favour of Christianity. In fact, however, they had hardly as much to say in favour of the Church as would have been said by CALIXT (1586-1656) and other German Protestants of his time.

The English apologists of the next century left for the most part unnoticed those passages in Church History that might have rendered, even in such a time as theirs, some most valuable services in the controversy against deism. We refer especially to those passages in which are set forth the moral and social benefits derived from the original principles and motives of Christian ethics. These benefits had been spread so widely that the principle of universal freedom, of which Plato and Aristotle had never dreamed, was reduced to the level of commonplace, and was claimed by deistic writers as the birth-right of mankind. As regards the ethical teaching of numerous deistic books—

English, French, and German—widely circulated in the course of the eighteenth century, there is an important distinction to be made. *Suum cuique*—Let the deists keep their own ; but let them, at the same time, restore what has been either unconsciously taken away, or deliberately stolen from Christianity. It is not said that no effort was made by Christian apologists to claim for the religion they defended the morals and motives essentially belonging to their creed ; but it is suggested that, with such learning as in several instances was arrayed on their side, they might have done more in dispelling errors—partly remaining at the present day—respecting the moral and the historical claims of deistic philosophy.

The common aim of the deistic writers has been to reduce Christianity to a code of morals ; and in many of their most popular books the morals are, for the most part, those collectively styled “eudaimonism ;” or those defined as having for their common ground “self-interest well understood.” This, however, is but a partial statement of facts : deistic books are numerous, and it is an undeniable fact that, in several instances, they contain true Christian morals. Indeed, in some writings belonging to our own time it will not be difficult to find both deistic and atheistic philosophy connected with ethical teaching obviously borrowed from Christianity. The writers are unconscious moral parasites, who live on the system they attack ; in other words, they assume as their own, or as common products of human reason, ethical principles belonging wholly to Christianity. They speak, for example, with just contempt of ill-acquired and hoarded wealth, while patiently-endured poverty is commended in tones of true Christian kindness. Continuous self-sacrifice, for the good of others, is regarded as a duty not impossible, and unbounded beneficence, such as the world has called wild or romantic, wins the admiration of men called deists. With less emphasis, they speak sometimes of inward purity, and of virtues that God alone can see and estimate ; but these also

are apparently regarded as products of unaided human reason, or as instincts of our common nature. Above all, it is freedom—the absolute freedom of every individual, in thought, word, and act, so far as unrestrained by mutual consent—it is this freedom that must be proclaimed as the great moving principle of modern life and society ; and this principle has, without doubt, been most energetically asserted by numerous writers whose creed or philosophy is called deistic, as well as by others whose atheology or agnosticism is less readily defined. The question suggested here is momentous : Do the virtues or principles above named belong, as asserted, to our own reason, or to the instincts of our nature, as overruled and guided by the enlightened philosophy of deism ? And, when supported by such virtues, can the principle of freedom be fully developed and safely carried out in practice without the aid of the Christian religion ? These questions demand some brief notice here ; for they will be suggested again and again when the writings of German deists and rationalists are more distinctly noticed. Their answer is almost invariably affirmative. Their principle of freedom, and their code of morals are (they say) alike independent of all such aid as a revealed religion can supply. Granting for a moment the truth of this assertion, it is obvious, then, that a large body of moral evidence on the opposite side must lose its force ; and reason, if capable of producing the best moral results hitherto ascribed to Christianity, must be accepted as a trustworthy guide. It follows also, that deism must be no longer described as a cold, abstract, and lifeless philosophy.

The importance of these conclusions is obvious ; and it is the duty of a Christian apologist to show the error of their premisses. If deism can fairly claim, and can put into force, all the best moral principles and rules found in modern deistic writings of the higher class, then it must be allowed that, in an ethical point of view, Christianity has to meet, if not a legitimate and competent rival, one morally respect-

able, so far as independent. But the suppositions on which the moral claims of deism are founded are delusions; those claims are not valid: their supposed validity is an error that has arisen out of ignorance respecting the nature and the history of religion. Of such ignorance instances might readily be found in deistic books of a low class; but it is fairer to notice here a book representing most favourably all the best teaching of modern deism;—a deism that must, as regards its ethical doctrine, be called eclectic.

This is the deism of M. SIMON'S work on "Natural Religion," a book of comprehensive and noble purpose, and hardly inferior to any ethical treatise of which the theological basis is deistic. It should be premised that the writer, sometimes borrowing thoughts from heathen philosophers—does not forget to refer often to the New Testament. Here is the beginning of a chapter, of which the special title is "Prayer":—

"There is a God perfectly good, and omnipotent, who has created the world and governs it. This God has placed us here on earth, in order that we may be tried by sorrow and sacrifice, and so may be prepared for the happy and immortal life that awaits us beyond the tomb. Here we have natural religion based on these dogmas: we know our origin, our law [of life] and our destination. This God, who by his own almighty will has created us, has treated us as a father treats his children; has made us immortal, and has bestowed on us, with liberty, also love, and intelligence. The course of trials to which we are made subject is necessarily mingled with bitterness; but we are not left solely dependent on our own resources. All things have been so arranged, in ourselves and around us, that we are enabled to accomplish our work, to do our duty, when once we have fairly resolved to do it. First of all, *we know our relations to God*, and we know of his nature all that we need know, in order to adore and love Him."

Obviously then—supposing this teaching to be based on our independent reason—of all pleas in behalf of revealed religion, that which is the strongest, as regards its appeal to our common sense, must lose a great part of its force, if it does not entirely fall to the ground; for it is assumed in

this plea that the Christian revelation has been and still is required, through the frailty of human reason.

But reason, says M. SIMON,—here representing the views of numerous deists—*can* tell us what we especially require to know, concerning God — providence — immortality—righteousness. In his attempts to establish his positions, there is to be noticed one very good trait; he does not make use of silent evasion. The grand difficulty discussed in the book of Job—the question to which Omniscience itself there gives no answer; this is not evaded by such a repartée as is given by POPE :

“ But sometimes virtue starves, while vice is fed—
What then !—is the reward of virtue bread ? ”

“ Yes,” would be the answer of common sense, says M. Simon, in effect, when he proceeds to show that man’s immortality alone can suggest a solution of doubts excited by the unequal distribution of natural good and evil in this world. To “ natural religion,” then, we must appeal for consolation, and if this “ religion ” really does contain all that M. Simon so clearly and eloquently sets forth, we shall not be severely disappointed. For here are some of the contents of his religion :—a firm belief in the existence of God ; a considerable knowledge of his will and his design as regards the moral education of mankind ; a firm assurance respecting the unsleeping vigilance of Divine Providence, and the immortality of the soul ; lastly, a trust in some final just arrangement of rewards and punishments. These are the cardinal points in the system of deistic or “ natural ” religion of which M. Simon is an able expositor. and it is not to be doubted, that for every assertion of his belief he has reasons that to his own mind are sufficient. But can these reasons be made *common* ? [Here the word is employed with its original force.] M. Simon knows well the force of this question ; for of all deistic writers he stands foremost in generosity. Again and again he notices the fact, that truths but dimly apprehended by philosophy have

by means of Christian teaching been made common. Solutions of difficulties too great to be encountered by the average intelligence of mankind, have been given in the way of revelation—the only way in which they can be given to “all men”—and of these solutions several are also given by M. Simon, but now in the form of philosophical conclusions. The fact is, that the atmosphere, intellectual and moral, surrounding us in these modern times, is so mixed with Christian influence, that it is difficult for any man—certainly for every generous and sympathetic man—to think, or write, on any religious, ethical, or philanthropic theme, without some unconscious repetition of ideas made common by One who said—“Heaven and earth shall pass away; but my words shall not pass away.” It is through the light shed forth by those ideas that we are now enabled to see so clearly the moral truths, made evident (as we suppose) by “the light of reason.”

In the upper dales and glens among mountains, there is often noticed an ocular deception that may surprise a young traveller. He is walking along a narrow dale, where the slope is so gradual that he hardly knows he is climbing. On the west his view is closely bounded, while on the east he sees, peering over a wall of dark rock, a snow-clad peak. Its whiteness, in contrast with the nearer dark rock, makes the peak seem near, and the traveller is surprised when told that it rises to a height of ten thousand feet above the sea-level. The fact is, he has already climbed some seven thousand feet, and the whole of the landscape about him, as far as he can see, is elevated. So, in Europe, at the present time, we stand morally on elevated ground, to which we have been raised by Christianity, and positions that for Plato and Aristotle were high, inaccessible—yea, invisible—seem now close at hand, or rise hardly over the level of our much-lauded “common sense.” There is a lower, and there is a higher common sense. The former is the result of many centuries of observations, made in the world of the senses, and classified by the understanding: the latter is

the result of revelation, accepted by faith, confirmed by spiritual experience, and found true in its applications to life and practice—so true that, at last, it is generally recognized as our Christian common sense. For one example, where is there a thoughtful man who—especially in our own times—does not see clearly, that freedom and sound morality must be closely united, if freedom is to be made compatible with the order of society? This is simply one of the axioms of common sense; but it may seem a paradox, when it is added, that our modern idea of freedom is but a sadly mutilated form of the perfect idea, first revealed when it was said:—"Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." The assertion may startle some rationalistic critics; but it is historically correct.

Enough has been said on this point to suggest that Christian apologists in the eighteenth century might have challenged more boldly the moral pretensions of deism, and on the other hand might have asserted more largely the moral and social beneficence of Christianity. In certain respects, their timidity had some excuse in the ecclesiastical circumstances of the time. The notions of sporadic inspiration that, during the commonwealth and afterwards, prevailed to a considerable extent, left behind them, among the English clergy, a dread of everything like enthusiasm. Mystic piety was still asserted here and there by a few lonely students, especially by WILLIAM LAW, whose book, the "Serious Call to a Holy Life," was not ineffectual in its day; and other exceptional instances might be named; but taking it as a whole, the time 1689-1750 was in England a period unfavourable to the growth of earnest religion. Not only miracles and fulfilments of prophecy, but also exceptional or unfashionable instances of piety, zeal and devotion, were made to appear highly improbable when measured by the standard set up in polite society. The age was critical, rather than teachable, and had little capacity for the study of history. A calm, objective, and comprehensive study of evidence—this first course of preparation for the work of

historical criticism—was not a distinguishing trait of the period. The limitation of its own clear understanding was viewed as the boundary-line, beyond which hardly a supposition was allowed. Consequently, the final negation to which rejections of various historical evidences seemed preparatory, was in fact predetermined. In other words, it was the central tenet of Christianity that deism endeavoured to destroy, in order that all positive religion might disappear, and leave room for an intelligible and practical system of morality. Yield that mysterious doctrine, said the deists, and all that belongs to it; then Christianity will appear in its proper form, or as a purely ethical system.

To a very large extent, and for a considerable space of time, the concession thus demanded was granted, in England, in France, and in North Germany; especially in Prussia, where deism, called rationalism, was triumphant during the time 1750-1800. The proposed experiment was made, and what has been the result? Has "free-thinking" found repose in negation? On the contrary, philosophy itself, while enjoying perfect freedom of thought and speech, has described deism as "a series of contradictions" and, in the present century, has made a movement of approximation toward that Christian doctrine of which a total sacrifice was demanded. Here this is but a preliminary assertion. Its proofs are given in the historical and analytical chapters following. They may be now introduced by some brief account of deism, as represented in England, in the latter half of the seventeenth century and the earlier half of the eighteenth. The English deism of this time was afterwards widely spread in France, and in Germany. In substance it remained unchanged, though in modes of expression it was altered.

JOHN TOLAND, in 1695, published a little book called "Christianity Not Mysterious," which soon excited considerable controversy. Among the numerous works produced to refute its reasonings, one, written by NORRIS, rector of Bemerton, ends with a prediction that such con-

cessions as Toland demanded must, if granted, lead to further demands, and could end only in a total negation of Christianity. The facts of the eighteenth century agree well with that prediction, published in 1697. The basis of Toland's reasoning is this:—nothing can justly require our faith and submission, save that which agrees with the laws of our understanding.

"The understanding is the man:" this axiom remained the basis of all reasonings against mysteries, from the days of Toland to the time 1781, when Kant published his analysis of that understanding of which so much had been vaguely written. He then went on to show that our ideas of God, moral duty, and immortality, are founded in our own nature, though they can never be demonstrated by our understanding. If it might be supposed that readers would always accept the word "understanding" with the meaning attached to it in Kant's analysis, then the whole history of rationalism might be clearly, and at the same time, briefly written. The word understanding—for which "reason," "enlightenment," "sense" and "common sense" were synonyms—denoted the final authority to which deists and rationalists referred, from the time of Toland down to 1781. When philosophy denied the absolutism of that authority, the end of rationalism, strictly so called, drew near. Its main axiom was refuted, not by "priestcraft," but by clear thinking, greatly aided by a high degree of moral purity. It was Kant who destroyed both the deistic doctrine and the moral teaching of old rationalism.

Toland's small book represented the fundamental principle of deism. The notion that any sentiment or thought—call it "instinct" or "intuition"—may be transcendent, or may lie beyond the limits of the understanding, and yet may be true, nay, holy and authoritative, demanding reverence and devout acceptation—this was accounted a baseless notion, at once to be rejected. Still more contemptuously to be rejected—if possible—was all belief in the historical validity of a character uniting in Himself natural and super-

natural, human and divine attributes. Here the negation—the basis on which rationalism was founded—was only formally distinct from the positive assertion so often implicitly repeated—"The understanding is the man." This devastating assertion at once makes an end of the Christian religion, and of a great number of good instincts, thoughts and sentiments, long supposed to be well grounded in our common human experience.

The range of Toland's negation was clearly seen by LEIBNITZ, who wrote one of the fifty-four replies that, before 1761, were elicited by this one little book—"Christianity Not Mysterious." There are some thoughts *above* your reason, said Leibnitz, though not contradictory, as you suppose; and—leaving alone the Christian religion—you may find in nature hints suggesting modesty in our reasonings; *e.g.* we talk of scents and colours, though our notions of them can hardly be called clear; and you speak of "substances" and "causes," as if knowing well your own meanings, though you have not clearly defined them. We are all finite creatures, and yet the infinite must be present in each of us. This, too, you may reject, simply because it is "mysterious." For so great is your dislike of "mystery," that you go on to ask:—"Were an incomprehensible truth revealed, what would be the use of it?"—I reply, the truth of magnetism, viewed simply as an existing force, is well known, and the mariner's compass is useful; though the laws of magnetic action are but partly known, and its source still remains incomprehensible."

The thoughts of Leibnitz were expressed in Latin, and in a style that in England seemed weak, when compared with that of the several bold writers who, in opposition to all belief in mysteries, appealed to the clear dictates of "common sense." Perfect freedom of inquiry was especially demanded by ANTHONY COLLINS (1676-1726) whose "Discourse of Freethinking" soon followed his book "Priestcraft in Perfection." With considerable ability, he asserts his own natural right to deny all that he does not

understand; yet he condescends so far as to cite some precedents, to establish his own principle. "Paul," says he, "was a freethinker." This suggestion of a rather wide contrast might have been as well avoided; for the apostle's inspiration—here strangely misnamed "freethinking"—surely led to positive and practical results. The results of Collins and his friends remind one rather of such words as these:—"The blindest fanatics are those whose zeal is destructive. What do they want?—For the most part, nothing positive. They would destroy and utterly clear away every vestige of 'superstition;' but what would they build on the site left vacant?—Granted they succeed; these 'enlightened' or 'advanced' men will be then left rusting in *ennui*, and the kindest thing to be proposed will be this: let a detachment from their party build up again some old superstition, so that their friends may again enjoy their only possible pleasure, which consists in pulling things down."

In making available for his own argument the concessions made by several of the apologists, COLLINS showed much dexterity when he attacked the evidences supplied by fulfilled prophecy. His argument was indeed made somewhat formidable by the the ill-concerted tactics of some of his opponents. They had largely conceded the principle, that their religion must mainly depend on historical demonstrations of miracles and fulfilled prophecies—the latter to be interpreted with some freedom. Respecting the literal sense, the apologists were not aided by the strange hypothesis then invented by Whiston. The original prophecies of the Old Testament, he contended, were long ago altered by the Jews, to the end that they should not afford sure evidence in favour of Christianity. Of all evidences, said Collins, the surest ought to be fulfilment of prophecy; but clearly, if the literal sense alone is accepted, the Messiah of the New Testament is not the Messiah of the Old. The controversy that followed was especially complicated and wearisome.

The next attack, led on by WOOLSTON (1669-1733) and

supported by ANNET (who died in 1768), was directed against miracles, especially against the resurrection, and called forth not less than sixty defensive publications. These endeavours did not stay the progress of unbelief. Before the middle of the century, MORGAN and CHUBB proclaimed their rejection of all positive religion. The latter, in his theory of "dreams" and "visions," as causes of belief in the resurrection, anticipated the conclusion to which Strauss was led in 1835. Further notice of Chubb's argument is deferred, as it will reappear in later pages. A similar remark might apply to many other reasonings of English deists; but their chief work, sometimes called "the deist's bible," must be named.

The "deist's bible" is properly entitled "Christianity as Old as the Creation, or the Gospel a Republication of the Religion of Nature." This is the book, once formidable, that served as an armoury for later deists, especially for THOMAS PAINE (1737-1809); and so great was its reputation, that in the course of a few years after its publication not less than a hundred books—English, French, and German—appeared as replies, intended to refute its arguments.

The author, MATTHEW TINDAL (1657-1733), had called himself a Roman Catholic, when James II was king; but in 1687 he left the Church, and by his later services under William III, obtained a pension of £200. His "religion of nature," as translated into familiar words, is a doctrine of which the virtual principle is self-love; while virtue, so far as it serves to insure personal comfort, is highly commended. It is understood, that self-love must be guided by intelligence, which again must be well guided by the divine reason displayed in nature; and virtue is defined as conduct accordant with that reason. Otherwise, virtue is self-guidance, consonant at once with insight, as regards the aims of nature, and with the assertion of perfect freedom. Accordingly, the writer is led to a rejection of every positive religion, so far as it professes to reveal anything

more than what is found in natural religion. To this doctrine of intelligent self-love several critics have applied the rather pedantic name "eudaimonism." The same practical teaching, respecting the motive of virtuous conduct, is found in the writings of LOCKE; but he does not reject positive religion. He rather shows, how a reasonable regard for our self-interest should lead us to accept the additional guidance which Christianity affords. The exceedingly modest claim thus asserted by Locke, on behalf of divine revelation, won for him an eminent position among English apologists, while in Germany, certain orthodox Lutherans described him as the coryphæus of deism. The fact was, so low was the general estimate of religion, as viewed by men of "polite" culture, that it was regarded as a condescension, when a philosopher like Locke found a word to say in favour of Christianity.

The doctrine of innate ideas—opposed to the theory which Locke had made predominant—was defended by ANTHONY ASHLEY COOPER, third Earl of Shaftesbury (1671-1713). His style of writing, too studiously polished, has not made perfectly clear his views of religion. They were not sorrowful, and not remarkably earnest. His moral teaching is Platonic in theory. Virtue, he says, must be loved when seen, and her dictates must be obeyed, without a thought of any reward save the happiness that essentially belongs to her presence. Let us love virtue; then we shall have a heaven upon earth. Of this real world, with its sins and sorrows, Shaftesbury tells us little or nothing. He finds here no dreadful antithesis of good and evil. Why should he inquire for a way of reconciliation? His aspect towards Christianity denotes mostly a placid independence of all such aid as a revelation can afford. He does not hate Christianity. The pure ethics of the religion, says he, are enough to recommend themselves. They do not require such aid as rewards and punishments can supply. So well was the writer satisfied with his own æsthetic and optimistic

views, that he had no wish to explore either the depth of man's fall or the height of divine mercy. His thoughts—say rather, dreams—were those of hopeful, ideal youth. Had he lived some few years longer, he might have known more of sorrow, and more of truth. He has been classed with the deists of his time; but theism is a name more applicable to his doctrine, so far as it clearly relates to any religious creed.

LORD BOLINGBROKE (1687-1751), the friend and teacher of Alexander Pope, claims notice here, chiefly with regard to his writings left in manuscript, which were edited by Mallet in 1754. In these it appears, that the writer had for some time clearly foreseen that Christianity must soon fall; it could not exist in the presence of spreading physical science and philosophy; or in other words, could not bear the "fierce light" of reason. It might be expected that the writer would go on to provide a substitute for the falling creed; but in fact this had been done already, as the moral substance of his philosophy had appeared in the "Essay on Man," published by Pope, in the course of the years 1732-4.

POPE lived and died within the pale of the Roman Catholic Church. Yet, during some years, while he lived at Twickenham, he called Bolingbroke his "teacher," and under his predominance the "Essay on Man" was written. Though a satirist, Pope was at heart gentle, and capable of a devoted friendship. In Bolingbroke he saw a great philosopher, whose presence demanded a submission of reason, as well as of faith. The poet's own faith was feeble, not to say confused, as well it might be; for in his boyhood he had studied ecclesiastical controversies so far that he could "dispute, confute, change hands—and still confute." As a matter of taste, he rather liked a variety of opinions on religion, and if he must have a patron saint, he would choose—Erasmus! As to metaphysical science, he describes his own progress as a going step by step with "my Lord

B.," who is thus addressed, in the apostrophe concluding the "Essay on Man :"—

"Come then, my friend! my *genius*! come along;
Oh, *master* of the poet, and the song . . .
Oh, while, along the stream of time, thy name
Expanded flies, and gathers all its fame . . .
Shall then this verse to future age pretend,
Thou wert my *guide*, philosopher, and friend?"

Here the word "pretend" is equivalent to "show," or "prove," and the fact to be proved is this—that the essay was written as an exposition of Bolingbroke's deism. Further evidence is found in the indignation of Bolingbroke, expressed when he learned the fact that his disciple had died professing the faith in which he had been educated. It should be remembered, that a more devoted son than Pope never lived. His latest religious act was closely united with the filial piety of his life.

In substance the deistic optimism of the "Essay" may be ascribed to Bolingbroke, and it is no insult to the poet's genius to say, that he did not clearly understand his own philosophy. To make it seem Christian, all the perverse learning of Bishop Warburton was required, and when he had done it, the poet, delighted, wrote to say—"You understand my system better than I do myself." Accepting the "Essay on Man," then, as a medley for which Leibnitz and Bolingbroke supplied the philosophy, while Pope made it almost attractive, the work may be described as the best positive result of English deism in the eighteenth century. Pope supplied, no doubt, not only the charms of his verse, the stings of his satire, and some outbursts of fine poetry, but also many good ethical thoughts, and their apt illustrations. As regards its plan—that "system" which was understood so well by Warburton—the essay is but a piece of patchwork.

The deeper scepticism of DAVID HUME (1711-76) belongs rightly to the history of philosophy, and must be noticed in a later chapter. It attacks the very basis of rationalism

itself, though its aid was at first made available in order to destroy the evidence by which faith in miracles had been defended.

Among the apologists whose writings belong to the eighteenth century, the first to be noticed is JOSEPH BUTLER, Bishop of Durham. Writing in 1736, he thus describes the notions of religious belief that, in his own time, were so widely spread in England:—

“It is come, I know not how, to be taken for granted by many persons, that Christianity is not so much as a subject of inquiry, but that it is now at length discovered to be fictitious. And accordingly they treat it as if, in the present age, this were an agreed point among all people of discernment; and nothing remained but to set it up as a principal subject of mirth and ridicule, as it were, by way of reprisals, for its having so long interrupted the pleasures of the world.”

BUTLER on one occasion suggested, as at least probable, the notion that an intellectual and moral epidemic might prevail throughout a large number of people, and for a considerable time. The thought seemed to be prophetic; for soon afterwards there followed a rapid spread of deism in France and Germany. It was hardly like the spread of a doctrine, for neither reading nor thought were required to make it popular. It might be said, the germs of unbelief were floating in the air, and diffused themselves in private houses, chapels, schools, nay—strange to say—in public restaurants, so as to infect not only learning and literature, but even daily conversation. In France and Germany, discussions on questions that in heathendom would have been held sacred, were not unfrequently associated with the ordinary social excitements of eating and drinking. Obviously a movement of this nature can hardly be defined as purely intellectual. The so-called morals of popular deism have been pedantically styled “eudaimonistic.” They were in fact earthly, egoistic, and mostly sensual; and in Germany the first heavy blow that fell on the leaders of popular deism was not intellectual, but moral. It was a

stern appeal to conscience, in opposition to their sophistry and sensualism. Our duty, said KANT, is not to do what we like, or what we can prove (as you say) to be convenient on the whole, or accordant with our own general welfare. Our duty is to do what is *right*, though we must immediately die for doing it. This—the doctrine that cast down the eudaimonism of the deists—was the teaching of Kant in 1787, and in substance this same moral doctrine had been anticipated by Bishop Butler in his sermons on “Human Nature”—sermons as well deserving notice as his more celebrated book the “Analogy,” etc., which was published in 1736.

One distinctive trait in the apologetic writings of this thoughtful bishop deserves especial notice; for at once it shows his courage and his good judgment. He does not attempt to conceal the “mysteries” or the difficulties of the Christian religion. This courage, which in ordinary times would hardly be called an eminent virtue, was by force of contrast made remarkable among the English apologists of Butler’s age. Of these writers several, by their coldness, timidity and reserve—to say nothing of their own unbelief—were not only made weak in defending their professed faith, but also gave much aid and encouragement to the enemy. “They might,” says a critic, “be likened to scared householders, who—attacked by midnight burglars—first throw out of the windows all their most valuable goods, and then begin to scream out ‘thieves!’ and ‘murder!’” To speak more respectfully, they were, for the most part, erroneous in their plan of defence. They went forth to meet the foe, just in the spot where lay all the strength of his position. If words seemingly pedantic were allowed, it might be said these apologists often attacked the “predicate,” in propositions where they should have shown that the character of the assumed “subject” was fictitious. This was especially the case as regards their treatment of the miracles recorded in the four Gospels. Here, in the formal logic employed on both sides of the controversy, the subject “miracles” was

to a large extent placed in isolation, and then the predicate, as asserted by the deistic writers, was of course "incredible." But the true subject is one that cannot be fairly represented by that one word "miracles," when we have to consider a special class of miracles.

The Christian apologist has to describe, and if possible to define, the evidence afforded by certain events called miraculous ; but first of all he must examine the historical basis of the writings in which those events are recorded. In these same writings, and in the closest union with accounts of miracles, he finds, not only a series of ethical teachings, so holy that their authority is clear as the sun at noonday, but more ; he finds also the records of a life in which humanity is indissolubly united with divinity. On the other side he finds, arranged in opposition to all evidence founded on miraculous narratives, the opinions of many men of science, metaphysical writers, and others, who mostly accept the ethical teaching of Christianity. The task of the Christian advocate is obviously difficult, and it is right that he should consider well the question, how far does his own Christian reverence affect his disposition to accept the evidence of miracles ? It is right, at the same time, that his opponent should, first of all, allow the question to be fully and fairly defined, so that the argument, intended to apply only to records of which the character is altogether exceptional, may not be misrepresented, or made to appear as a plea in favour of general credulity.

It is not intended that anything generally disrespectful should be said of the English apologists, whose names include those of Locke, Addison, Lardner, Foster, Leland, and Paley. Their writings, however, tended more or less to isolate and make prominent the evidences that, as treated by their followers, were made chiefly historical. The isolation in which evidences of this class were too often placed, left them more exposed to the attacks of the deistic writers. Let these evidences be established—it was said, or implied—then your religion must remain firm ; but if these be

found invalid the religion must fall. The challenge thus held out by the deists was often accepted by the apologists. It was virtually this:—in your evidence, let everything historical, including all facts called miraculous, be established, as surely as the fact that “Cæsar was assassinated” has been established, then we will accept your religion, and simply because we shall then be compelled to believe it. The question, therefore, was mostly reduced to one respecting various degrees of historical probability. On some points the evidence adduced by the apologists was irresistible; on other points it was less powerful. And similar gradations in the force of evidence are found on the side of the deists and their followers. In one book, for example, where the general aim is to reject miracles, the writer begins by admitting the reality of one miracle, and ends by confessing that he has great difficulty in showing how far, and on what grounds, he must deny the fact of the resurrection. Yet he does deny it, and for certain reasons of which he gives no clear account. In another book, the writer, who sets aside, as unauthentic, the whole of St. John’s Gospel, finds a great difficulty both in accepting and in rejecting the fact of the resurrection. He finds himself, therefore, compelled to doubt, and at the same time entertains serious doubts respecting the grounds of his own scepticism.

Instances of the same kind might easily be multiplied; but enough has been said to show what has been the basis or common ground assumed in many disputes. The whole question of accepting or rejecting Christianity has, in many arguments, been made dependent on the historical evidence of one isolated fact. It is to this way of reasoning that LESSING alludes where he says:—“When will you see your error, in thus hanging the interests of a whole eternity upon one fibre in a spider’s web?” This exclamation represents the views of several writers, more orthodox than Lessing, but like him offended by the exclusive or isolating way of studying historical evidences.

PHILIP SKELTON who, near the middle of the eighteenth

century, wrote against English deism, also wrote against the views of several Christian apologists. They assumed, he said, in their own reasonings, certain deistic principles, and diminished both the mysteries and the morals of Christianity. To the same effect MEINIGEN, who translated Locke's work, the "Reasonableness of Christianity" (1695) wrote thus in 1733 :—

"This especially is the error of the English apologists: they confound with the wisdom of God the wisdom of this world. For example, Locke, in his essay, lessens the number of our articles of faith and, by making a mixture of light and darkness, seeks to please men of all confessions."

PFÄFF—Chancellor at Tübingen, 1750—classed Locke's defence of Christianity with the writings of John Toland and other deists. ERNESTI, the philologist, writing in 1759, thus described the tendencies of several English writers whom Pfaff had classed with the apologists :—

"The worthy Chancellor," says he, "while deploring the effect of so many English deistic books, translated and read in our land, has consoled himself with the thought, that the writings of several English apologists are also translated and widely read. This, however, is but a scant consolation. For the most part, these apologists will do no harm to the deists. For one example, Taylor, in one of his anti-deistic books—so called—says much of the Reign of God; but when he goes on to describe the advantages of this reign, as proclaimed in the Gospel, he shows us nothing better than an improved edition of natural religion. Deists understand little of their own interests, if it is supposed that they can be injured by any books of this class."

These quotations, which might easily be multiplied, are enough to indicate the chief defect of the apologists: they did not efficiently represent the claims of their own religion; but granted too much of the claims asserted in favour of reason and natural theology. If the Christian religion is to be accepted as a revelation of God's own nature and his will, it follows that no other revelation can be required. It is finally authoritative, as a divine act, against which all opposition must be vain.

If the Christian religion is *not* to be thus accepted, it may be fairly supposed that no divine revelation has been, or will be made, for the benefit of mankind. We are left, therefore, to be guided by our own reason, or by "the light of nature." Still we are not left in the dark, if unaided reason has already established such a creed as certain advanced deists have held: that One God—omniscient, omnipotent, and perfectly benevolent—exists; that his will, so far as our duties are concerned, is clearly written in our conscience, and that he has given us the power to obey, and by so doing, make sure our own highest happiness. Granting that all this is now clearly known, and also that no supernatural revelation has ever been made, then it must follow clearly, that unaided human reason has already raised us to a high degree of intellectual and moral dignity. But the supposition on which this assertion rests must be closely examined.

There is found in the New Testament (Rom. i. 20-22) teaching to the effect, that where no other revelation is known, God's existence, power, and authority are made known by means of things created; but St. Paul, in the passage indicated, speaks of One whose will has been revealed not alone in nature, but more clearly in the Person of Christ. The apostle says nothing that can be quoted in favour of an alleged, actual, sufficiency of reason: on the contrary he goes on to assert the wilful failure of human reason and a consequent debasement of human nature. He then shows the need of such a revelation as he has to declare.

Yet it is assumed by some writers, that Christianity and modern deism agree to a large extent, because they both say, There is One God, and ascribe to Him the same attributes; but can it be logically maintained, that they are here speaking of one and the same Subject? Christianity speaks of One who has distinctly revealed his own character and will, with light of evidence infinitely clearer than the light of self-debased reason. Deism, on the contrary, speaks of One who has never so revealed Himself, but who is never-

theless known, by the light of reason, as One existing in perfect independence, and possessing omniscience, omnipotence—perfect benevolence. The two notions of absolute benevolence and profound reserve are thus held together in modern deism, as if the compound notion so formed implied no self-contradiction.

The most obvious way of escape from the difficulty suggested, is to say that reason, or “the light of nature,” is sufficient for man’s guidance, and therefore takes the place ascribed to revelation. Here is the proposition especially requiring analysis, in order to show the exact point where deistic and Christian views diverge, respecting the comparative claims of reason and revelation; and it is here that our apologists rendered inefficient services. On one side they too freely granted some claims preferred in behalf of unaided human reason; on the other, they too timidly asserted the claims of their own faith. When so much was told of all that reason had done for the moral elevation of men, the questions “Where” and “When” should have been urged more pertinaciously. For example: Where and when did reason first proclaim, for the benefit of the whole human race, that men and women, all over the world, are all equal and free, as the children of One Father?—And when did reason first find out how that proclamation could be carried into effect, so as not to destroy, but to build up and sanctify human society? All this remains a problem too difficult to be encountered by reason, even in the present enlightened age, though its perfect solution was *revealed* almost two thousand years ago.

To conclude this chapter — one chief characteristic of English deism must be especially noticed, because it served to encourage the German rationalism and popular philosophy of which some account is to be given. The deism of the eighteenth century was mostly Utopian.

It was assumed by the earlier deistic writers, that man has an aspiration toward a knowledge of God; and that this

motive, guided only by experience and reason, and unassisted by a positive, supernatural revelation, can lead man on to a knowledge of all the truth required to insure his highest spiritual and material welfare; to a knowledge of his own immortality; his true destination; and the duties belonging to his present and future existence. In brief, then, were the Christian religion destroyed, there would not, therefore, be left for us a world without faith and hope, or a moral chaos; but on the contrary, a world still illumined by the light of natural and rational religion! This would surely follow, as the result of man's own developed reason, and as soon as the obstacles presented by superstition could be removed out of the way. This was the creed of TINDAL's natural religion—a faith "as old as the creation"—boldly preached in England, and soon afterwards heartily accepted in Germany. It might have been more boldly challenged by its opponents, the English apologists; but that is not the point to be noticed here. We rather notice the fact, that the new faith now proclaimed was Utopian, bold, cheerful, hopeful, and thus presented itself as a welcome contrast when set against the forms and institutions in which the true, social, and beneficent character of our Christian faith was defectively represented. Let all that is fair and true be said of German "enlightenment" in the eighteenth century; otherwise the movement will never be understood. It was remarkably hopeful, and had some good ends in view; but it was based in one deep error—a false conception of human nature. The good results of Christian labours and sacrifices continued throughout several centuries were now simply claimed as innate virtues belonging to human nature itself. All that was further required was more extensive freedom, attended with general secular education, in order that those innate virtues might unfold themselves as flowers in spring-time, and so make a perfect paradise of this world!

These hopes, entertained by so many in the eighteenth century, are not mentioned now to suggest a satiric smile,

but to throw light on the shallow deism of that time. It was surely not altogether a gloomy creed ; for it was partly associated with thoughts that rightly belong to Christianity, and with hopes that can never be realized without the aid of our Christian faith.

In our own times, unbelief assumes a less cheerful aspect, and even among those who are more or less sceptical, there is felt some lingering respect for our religion ; but the respect is too often attended by the thought—" either this, or atheism."

Now in Germany (1750-80) there was rarely a thought of such an alternative. The "popular philosophy" of that time had no fear of atheism or of social revolution. These facts will serve, in a large measure to make clear the rapid spread and the popularity of deism in Germany.

CHAPTER III.

RATIONALISM.

BEFORE the year 1750, English deism was largely imported into France and Germany. During the remainder of the century, the doctrine apparently fell into neglect in England—why, one can hardly tell concisely. At the same time, while deism was dying, the vigorous movement called Wesleyan Methodism, begun by the brothers John and Charles Wesley, was rapidly spreading itself in England. This was an earnest appeal to the people, not to the comparatively small class of readers to whom deistic books had been mostly addressed. The strength of the movement, and its correspondent expansion, had their source in a restoration—a revival—of that tenet which Arianism and deism had endeavoured to destroy.

In France deism was very rapidly spread by Voltaire, who asserted mostly, though not without some wavering, *il y a un être suprême*, and also—again not firmly—the soul's immortality. His contemporary Condillac said in substance what others soon said formally, that man is a mere animal. For man thus defined Helvetius prepared a suitable code of morals, all founded on self-love. Diderot, a man of larger mind, could see the vast difficulty of putting into a systematic form the facts of consciousness; he therefore wavered, and after asserting deism, inclined more and more to the notions usually collected under the term "pantheism"—a term so often connected with confusion of thought, that it is employed unwillingly here, as in some other places. It is, perhaps, better to say, that Diderot's views gradually assumed more and more a negative aspect toward the

assertion of God's existence and the soul's immortality. La Mettrie—the friend of Frederick II.—was a materialist, and his doctrine was developed more largely in the book entitled “Système de la Nature” (1770), most probably written by Holbach. This was an assertion of atheism and materialism. The earlier deism of Rousseau—widely accepted in Germany—will be noticed in some later pages.

In Germany, among the more frivolous classes of readers—including the Court and the Aristocracy—French books were the chief means of spreading low, sensual notions of morals and a general contempt of all religion. These results of French influence are mostly included when the German deism of the eighteenth century is vaguely described; but such confusion does not fairly represent the facts of the case. German deism arose, first of all, out of the natural decay of Lutheran orthodoxy; and the transition was greatly aided by the importation of English literature, including almost the whole literature of deism. And though the fact may seem a paradox, it should be especially noticed, that in Germany deism was not only more deeply studied, but also more *clearly* understood, than in England. The English literature of deism—aided by other causes—led to the revolution of doctrine that took place (1750-1800) in the universities of Prussia, as well as in those of Altdorf, Erlangen, Giessen, Helmstadt, and Jena. Nevertheless, the movement ought to be viewed, in the first place, as the natural—one might say logical—result of an internal decay in Lutheran orthodoxy.

In every great religious movement, the leading principle is at once subjective and objective; in other words, it appeals to a supposed moral want in man, and then brings forward something positive, intended to meet that want. This is said in an abstract, or philosophical way, and without reference to the historical claims of any creed or doctrine. Whatever the creed, there must be found within it a grasp, a hold on human nature. This grasp is everywhere the sign of vitality and power.

It is interesting to observe sequences in history, which possibly may lead at last to a knowledge of their laws. If there is a law already well known, it is this: that where one of the chief factors in any movement, religious or political, is long neglected, it is likely to appear in a separate form, and to set up a life of its own. This rule was never more clearly exemplified than in the apparently sudden movement of rationalism, following a time when Lutheran orthodoxy had bound so fast the souls of men, that many were made secret rebels. The facts of the case were not seen immediately, or in the shape of formal divisions; in other words, new sects did not arise. This was prevented by the territorial system of church government, which, to a very large extent, left in the hands of princes, or other secular rulers, the power of suppressing doctrines called heterodox. Under such a government it is obvious that great changes might take place within the pale of a confession, while it remained externally quiet or undivided. This was, indeed, the fact as regards Lutheranism at the opening of the eighteenth century. The claims of individual thought and feeling, formerly conceded, were now virtually denied. A great decline had taken place in the leading principle of the confession. This principle—at once subjective and objective—had for its two sides personal faith and scriptural authority. But gradually the faith, at first defined as personal (therefore “mystic,” in the strict sense of the term) was changed in definition, and made identical with faith in the authority of Scripture. For the historical fact thus briefly stated, evidences are too numerous to be noticed here.

As subordinate to this main cause of decay, one attendant cause—the spread of scientific books—may be noticed. So charmed were certain students by the results of modern astronomy, that they endeavoured to make the Bible itself Copernican, while others so far accepted modern notions respecting a plurality of inhabited worlds, that their utterly unknown inhabitants were cited among scientific evidences

against orthodoxy. On the other hand, it was granted by the orthodox that all the evidences of religion must be presented in a purely intellectual form; and professors of theology were, therefore, proud of their discovery when they found out the fact, that Wolff's mechanical philosophy—which could prove anything not self-contradictory—might be employed as a means of “demonstration” in Christian theology.

There remains to be noticed another subordinate cause of decay, and of this the name may, for a moment, excite surprise—Pietism, as spread first by Spener and his followers, and later among the United Brethren. In England the age of deism preceded the rise of Methodism: in Germany the order was reversed, Pietism preceded rationalism, and the controversy excited by Spener and his followers served partly to prepare the way for rationalism. The same observation applies to certain disputes and persecutions, excited by the later pietistic movement led on by Count Zinzendorf. In each case the intention of the pietists was clearly opposed to rationalism; their aim was to change, not so much the tenets of orthodoxy, as its whole tone and character which, as they said truly, had been changed into an intellectual system of dogmas, and made cold, hard, and dry. They were partly successful, here and there, in carrying their own intention into practice, and doubtless their movement served to delay for a time the open appearance of rationalism; nevertheless it remains true, that the enmities and controversies of their time were circumstances favourable to the spread of unbelief. For one part of the evidence that could be adduced, a reference may be given to the autobiography of SEMLER—the coryphæus of the rationalists. He was educated among the pietists at Halle, where soon afterwards his great learning was mostly devoted to the work of spreading doubt on everything—excepting solely his own religion which, as he often said, was “private.”

The reign of Frederick II was called “the age of

enlightenment"—*Aufklärung*, more literally translated as a "clearing-up," such as sometimes takes place at noon, after a cloudy morning. The age of positive religion had passed away, it was said, and reason must now be supreme in all things. In the earlier years of this reign, a quiet orthodoxy was still maintained among the professors in several universities. One fair example of this class was MOSHEIM (1649-1755) the church historian and elegant stylist, who wrote, in Latin, one of the fifty-four books and tracts published before 1760 in order to refute Toland's book against mysteries. Another eminent professor was BAUMGARTEN (1706-57) who was esteemed orthodox. It was noticed, however, that his library contained an almost complete series of English deistic books. MICHAELIS, the orientalist of Göttingen, was also classed with the orthodox of his time. In an earlier day he would not have escaped censure, had he published then such a passage as the following, written in 1760:—"Respecting the *testimonium Spiritus Sancti*, I have never understood anything more than such evidence as the Bible affords of its own divine origin."—He here refers only to such evidence as is supplied by recorded miracles.

ERNESTI, another orthodox professor, contended especially for a purely grammatical interpretation of Scripture. It may be added, that he accepted LOCKE as a guide to the right method of expounding St. Paul's epistles.

Next to the orthodox may be named three eminent preachers, as examples of the class of men called moderate rationalists. They contended that the whole value of religion is found in the guidance it affords for the conduct of practical life; and their morals were mainly utilitarian. SACK (1703-86) was Court Chaplain at Berlin, and was a diligent reader of the English deistic books written by Toland, Collins, and Morgan. Another student and preacher of the same class was SPALDING (1714-1804) who, in his autobiography, tells us how first his faith received a violent shock. He was present, it seems, when certain

professors of theology were rather timidly discussing the question, how they might best confront the attacks made by English deists. Spalding was especially an admirer of Shaftesbury's writings, and weakly imitated his style. JERUSALEM (1709-89) was a moralist and moderate rationalist, highly esteemed as a preacher. He had passed three years in England, and there had studied the writings of the deists, and of their opponents, the apologists.

Next to these representatives of a moderated rationalism must be named Reimarus, who utterly rejected as a fraud the whole of positive Christianity. HERMANN SAMUEL REIMARUS, born at Hamburg (1694), studied at Jena (1714-16), travelled in Belgium and England (1720-21), and in 1727 was appointed Professor of Hebrew (later of mathematics) in the Gymnasium of his native place. He was a man of varied attainments, and his favourite studies were natural history and physico-theology. Of the writings published in his life-time the chief are two treatises, one on the truths of natural religion, the other on the instincts of animals. In our own day, unbelief is deeper and darker than in the time when Reimarus, feeling no need of any revelation, could establish his own doctrine of the soul's immortality on such observations as the following :—

“ It is as natural in us to look forward beyond this world, as it is in the lower animals to remain satisfied with their present life. Their nature is confined within certain bounds; our own is distinguished by its capacity of continual development; and a desire for such development has been planted in us by our Creator.

“ Now where do we find instincts falsified in the plan of nature? Where do we see an instance of a creature endowed with an instinct craving a certain kind of food in a world where no such food can be found? Are the swallows deceived by their instinct when they fly away from clouds and storms to find a warmer country? Do they not find a milder climate beyond the water? When the May-flies and other aquatic insects leave their husks, expand their wings, and soar from the water into the air, do they not find an atmosphere fitted to sustain them in a new stage of life? Certainly. The voice of nature does not utter false prophecies. It is the call, the invitation

of the Creator addressed to his creatures. And if this is true with regard to the impulses of physical life, why should it not be true with regard to the superior instincts of the human soul?"

Confidence in such reasonings as these was the characteristic of popular philosophers in the eighteenth century. For them history, or any other external authority, could hardly be more than an echo of a verdict pronounced by reason. They were not altogether negative in their aims; the tenets which they held as true—such as the existence of God and the immortality of the soul—were held firmly; but several of their expositions of natural theology were shallow and optimistic; they neither looked on the dark side of nature, nor tested the logic on which the physico-theological arguments were founded. Consequently Reimarus, now remembered as the writer of a most destructive book, was in his own day accepted as an eminent moralist and religious teacher; and after his death (1768) his arguments for God's existence and the soul's immortality were recommended as antidotes to the spread of French materialism. The deism of Reimarus was grounded on careful studies of English authors. His moral teaching—utilitarian, otherwise called eudaimonistic—was like that spread by the school of "popular philosophers," and therefore requires no especial notice in this place. The fact is, that his positive services have long ago passed away, and his name is now associated only with his secret and resolute assault on the history and the doctrines of Christianity. He attended the religious services of his confession, maintained throughout his life a good moral character, won for himself a fair reputation by his writings on natural theology, and was esteemed for his services as a professor; but the work to which his most earnest studies were devoted was a book intended for posthumous publication, and entitled: "An Apology, or Defence, for Rational Worshippers of God." The task of writing this book—from time to time enlarged, amended, or partly rewritten—was begun as early as the year 1744, and was completed in 1767. The writer's intention was

that, for some years longer, the whole work should remain a manuscript, to be published in a coming time, still more enlightened than his own age. Its contents will be noticed in a following chapter.

The "Apology" of Reimarus—remaining in manuscript some thirty years—had of course no effect on the early progress of German rationalism. At first its chief characteristic was a free historical criticism—not a total rejection—of the Scriptures. Whatever in history or in doctrine was found not to accord well with common results of human experience, was rejected or explained away.

The true leader of the rationalists was SEMLER, a man whose character was a compound not easily described. Something like it may, however, be indicated by means of contrast. There is a class of men—including a rather large proportionate number of the great and the good—whose minds are at once expansive and sympathetic. Though varying widely in their creeds and opinions, they have all one common trait. Alike in their faith as in their theory, they desire union with the minds of other men. For the sake of union, they are ready to sacrifice almost everything but sincerity. In religion, they especially long to find some common basis—a place of rest—a home, where all who are scattered in the wilderness of this world may meet together. Accordingly, these pacific men do not like the kindling of strife, nor the suggestion of doubt. Where some high principle or vital question does not demand assertion or investigation, they would let minor historical queries have the repose that suits their subordinate interest. When men who love peace find themselves compelled to disturb the repose of a faith long cherished, the duty must be painful. Semler was a man of another class. To destroy faith in historical Christianity, and veneration for the Early Church, was a task undertaken by him, if not with pleasure, with the rude indifference shown by a labourer of the lowest caste, while engaged in his work of pulling down old buildings. This



was the kind of work to which Semler devoted the resources of his enormous reading, and the untiring industry of his long career. For forty years he held the post of Professor of Theology at Halle, whence the influence of his teaching was widely spread. Of his one hundred and seventy books and tracts, published during his life-time, few are read now; but their results have been largely distributed through the works of other writers. The story of his life, written by himself, fairly displays his character.

JOHANN SALOMO SEMLER (1725-91) was educated among the Pietists at Halle. Here his omnivorous taste for reading found ample supplies in the private library of Prof. Baumgarten, whose collection of books written by English deists was almost complete. Young Semler here rebelled secretly against Pietism, and soon made himself master of the principles maintained by the deists. His early course of reading led him to the conclusion, that religion should be viewed as a private affair existing *toto cælo* apart from all theological tenets, and all ecclesiastical institutions. In religion, says Semler, no two men can ever think alike. Each has for his guide his own conscience, aided by his own interpretation of Scripture, and so comes to results which another man, though trained in the same Church, cannot apprehend, and though equally pious, can neither understand nor believe. On the other hand, forms of church government, and theological systems are matters of local and temporal interest, and should be left subject to the control of civil authority. The Bible is for the most part only a republication of natural religion, yet it contains some few tenets that can be rightly accepted only by an inspired faith—*fides divina*. Our one sure evidence that the Bible contains divine teaching is found in the simple fact, that its perusal tends to our edification. These are the only clear lines of demarcation drawn by Semler between his own principles and those held by later critics who were more destructive than himself, though they were indeed his

own pupils. They left nothing objective remaining ; while they despised his subjective piety.

Apart from the few general notions already stated, there is found in Semler's writings little that is clear and positive ; nothing in which soul or mind can find rest. The reader finds himself in a chaos—*thohu va-bohu*, as Prof. Tholuck observes—where *πάντα ῥεῖ* ; all is in everlasting flux. As Semler often says, “ nothing is so remarkable as this endless diversity of opinions.” But even here he is not disturbed ; the contention of the elements, the gales blowing at once from all the four quarters, do not shake the repose of his “ private religion.” He rules still—if such a paradox may be allowed—sole anarch in the chaos he has discovered.

He finds chaotic elements in the New Testament, as in the Old. It is not surprising when we are told that the story of Samson is “ a myth.” The assertion, that many passages of Scripture have especially a local and temporal interest cannot be fairly gainsaid on the whole ; but among Semler's extensive applications of this principle, some are indeed surprising. For example, we are told, that St. Paul's own teaching respecting marriage was accommodated, or made to suit certain “ Jewish prejudices in favour of celibacy.” Among the books cast out of the canon are the following :—Ruth, Esra, Nehemiah, Esther, the two books of Chronicles, and the Apocalypse ; others are left in a doubtful position, and of the Synoptic Gospels many parts, it is said, have nothing more than a local and temporal interest ; in other words, they are addressed to the Jews of the first century, and not to modern Christians. As one concise example of Semler's haste and self-confidence in treating difficult passages, the text of Rom. viii. 20 may be noticed. Here he makes *κτίσις* a collective term, denoting heathens who worship idols ; and the *ὑποτάξας*, who compels them so to worship, is—Nero ! This error is, however, unimportant when compared with the main

characteristic of Semler's criticism. As he goes on, he casts aside as hardly worth notice all passages serving, as he says, only to give expression to "small local ideas." Of such passages he makes at last a very large class, and among them are found those relating to "the Kingdom of Heaven." Of the critical writings in which Semler's learning is especially made apparent his "Treatise on the Canon of Scripture" (1750) may be named. In this book the notion was first suggested, that the Early Church consisted for a time of two parties, one following Peter, the other Paul. This is the germ of a theory which in our time has been largely developed by F. BAUR.

If possible, Semler's treatment of early ecclesiastical history is even more destructive than his biblical criticism. He has no love of union and order. The thought, that a spiritual faith is not necessarily destructive of self-manifestation, does not belong to his "private religion." He sees despotism where others find order; or he shows us how apparent order serves but to mask endless dissensions of belief. The Christian Church of the first two centuries had been treated with respect, even by avowed deists, and in Semler's own time was still described by Protestants as an ideal union of practical devotion and doctrinal purity. But here again he finds nothing better than a chaos of dissentient opinions and tendencies, and once more he finds reasons for some further repetition of his favourite axiom—no two men can have the same religion. With this conclusion he rests satisfied, after all his researches in ecclesiastical history. This, like theology, is a study for professors. The results of their researches afford occupation and amusement for inquisitive minds; but have no connection with religion, which is a strictly private affair. In Semler's own case, the clearest part of his piety was his recognition of a particular Providence directing the course of his own life. "None can tell," said he, "what I feel, when I recall to mind the many benefits I have received." Scarcely could it occur to a mind so contracted, that a man

less fortunate might require something deeper and larger than this personal piety for prosperous men.

Lessing was, of course, offended by Semler's want of clearness, and addressed to him the question—never answered—"Where does your theology end, and your religion begin?"—The same question was well put by Zopf-Schulz, an avowed deist and Lutheran pastor, who gained some notoriety by his courage and his plainness of speech. His chief aim was to show that "morality and religion are as far distant from each other as heaven and earth." He then proceeded to show that religion—even Semler's minimum—must lead on to theology, which, as Semler had shown, was useless. Hence he concluded that morality alone was man's proper study. Zopf-Schulz, the avowed deist and bold writer, was silenced: Semler, enjoying an intensely subjective and domestic repose, went on lecturing and writing, making of the Bible "a waxen nose," and destroying the faith of thousands. Yet he denounced vehemently the conduct of Lessing, when he edited some of the papers left by Reimarus. So shut up in himself was Semler, that he could not recognize his own image, when reflected from a clear mirror. It is not clear that he was a conscious hypocrite, even when he wrote against his own most prominent disciple—Dr. Bahrdt. Some account must next be given of this disciple who in his time was called "a martyr."

KARL F. BAHRDT (1741-92) was a man who had the coarseness of thought and feeling characteristic of his teacher; and like him he was especially endowed with an energetic constitution and a sanguine temperament. To these causes, left without religious control, must be ascribed at once his sensual and licentious life and his audacious irreverence. In his autobiography he gives a portraiture of himself, that may be accepted as fair on the whole, when one important chronological error has been corrected. Licentious conduct preceded the "persecutions"—so called—by which, as he tells us, he was driven into utter unbelief. His first disgrace took place at Leipzig, where, about the

year 1768, he had gained by his eloquent preaching a considerable popularity. It was not a charge of heterodoxy that drove him away from Leipzig. Next he obtained an appointment as Professor of Biblical Antiquities at Erfurt, and soon afterwards, well recommended by two learned professors, Semler and Ernesti—the latter orthodox—he came to Giessen (1771), where he was still recognized as Professor of Theology when he published (1772-5) his notorious translation of the New Testament. The animadversions called forth by this book led Bahrdt to retire from his post; and for some years afterwards he was engaged in an endeavour to establish a school for advanced students.

In 1779 he came to Halle, and his arrival was a cause of much annoyance to Semler, who was still teaching there. At Halle, under the tolerant government of Friederich II, Bahrdt enjoyed perfect liberty, and lectured eloquently and with much success on rhetoric, morals, philosophy, philology, and any other subject that came in his way. Meanwhile his pen was not idle; of his one hundred and twenty-six books and tracts, issued during his life-time, several were written at Halle, among them his "Popular Letters on the Bible" (1782) in which he largely expanded Semler's first hint about myths, and suggested the theory accepted afterwards by Strauss and others. Next followed the "Letters for Truth-seeking Readers" (10 vols. 1784-6) of which any further account is morally impossible. These and other books, produced in the course of the ten years 1780-90, were sources of considerable gain: but nothing could ever appease his insatiable thirst of money. The cry was ever "more," until the patience of his friend and protector Zedlitz—Minister of Public Instruction at Berlin—was exhausted. He had written very kindly to Bahrdt, reminding him of the main charge preferred against him:—"Your errors come from the heart, not from the head, they say; but your own good sense will show you how best that charge may be refuted by the correctness of your practical life."

Not long afterwards, Zedlitz was compelled to write thus to Dr. Bahrdt :—

“Your pertinacity torments me so, that at last in self-defence, I must give you my own opinion respecting your rapacity. There is not a single place under government—or hardly one, from the post of Master of the Horse to the Chair of Mathematics or Anatomy—for which you do not make application in your own behalf.”

The next passage in the life of Bahrdt seems incredible. He was not left in impoverished circumstances when, in order to increase his income, he purchased a vineyard with its adjoining tavern, situated near Halle, and here established himself as a tavern-keeper. Here, during the last five years of his life—excepting one year’s imprisonment—he displayed at once his versatility of talent, and his utter want of morality. The tavern was made a school of advanced profanity. His courses of Sunday Lectures, attended by students, tradespeople, and military men of a frivolous class, were especially successful. The quondam Professor of Theology could here at will pass “from grave to gay, from lively to severe,” and could alternately move his audience to tears and to laughter. Reports of his latest jests and caricatures were spread abroad in the coffee-houses and taverns of Halle and its neighbourhood. Semler was greatly annoyed, though he could not see clearly the fact, that Bahrdt was his own pupil.

During the year 1789, Bahrdt suffered imprisonment for writing a satire against the new Minister of Public Instruction, Wöllner, whose edict against the spread of unbelief had appeared in 1788. This attempted legislation was remarkably ineffective, and was recalled when only one pastor—Zopf-Schulz, already named—had been removed from his office. For the remainder of his days, Bahrdt lived and preached as before at his tavern, here again displaying his versatile talents, and acting by turns as clown, lecturer, or waiter, so as to make no inconsiderable amount of money. And here he died, though not in poverty, yet in extreme misery (1792). It is fair to add a few words

taken from his autobiography, and giving his own account of the ruling motive of his career. The fact that his first disgrace had no relation to any religious question has already been named :—

“I firmly believe I should have remained orthodox ; should have expended my talents in propping up the decayed old system ; and might perhaps have given it a new coat of philosophical whitewash—if I had not been so spitefully persecuted by theologians. The fact of the case was, that my great success in Leipzig, and the applause I won there, excited their envy, and therefore they made my life miserable at Erfurt. This first gave me a hatred of orthodoxy ; hence arose my notion, that positive religion makes men persecutors, and that their own creed must now be made to suffer in its turn.

“If they had left me still at rest—enjoying a liberal salary, and unvexed by scandal—all might have been well. Instead of that, they have left me—conscious of my own talents, and my worth—the pain of seeing miserably ignorant men richly rewarded, while I am battling with poverty. However, Providence has willed to make of me the leader of a storming party against the theology that has so long abused Europe. I have been hunted about by inquisitors until at last my eyes are opened, and I see now my destiny for the remainder of my life. It is to do all that is possible in order to destroy the very basis of all persecution—that basis is positive religion.”

The story of Dr. Bahrdt would not deserve repetition, if his character were wholly exceptional ; but this is not the case. His energy and vivacity were indeed rare ; but his rapid progress in unbelief was typical, as regards the extreme results of rationalism in his time. If we select about twenty names representing the more prominent deistic writers then living in Prussia and several neighbouring states, some five might represent the older and more cautious men, who could hardly see the end of the way in which they were going ; again some five names would belong to men of extreme views, who might be classified with Dr. Bahrdt ; but the remaining ten would be those of the moderate men who were called “popular philosophers.” Their chief aim was to make their morality, which was partly Christian, a substitute for revealed

religion. If their names are to be given in order, showing their relative degrees of importance, Nicolai must have the first place, though he has been made an especial butt of ridicule; chiefly on account of his dogmatism in the later years of his life. He outlived his own reputation.

CHRISTOPH FRIEDRICH NICOLAI (1733-1811) an industrious writer, was also for a long time the editor and publisher of the "Universal German Library," a popular review that served—especially during the time 1765-92—as an encyclopædia of rationalism, and was accepted as an authoritative guide in all questions relating to religion and literature. Its principles were deistic; but these were held as not irreconcilable with a liberal interpretation of Christianity, which was accepted as identical with natural religion. Nicolai's review thus fairly represented the views of many moderate men, who did not deny the possibility of a divine revelation, but accepted the New Testament, at least as a moral guide, while they held that its contents had been partly falsified by tradition.

CHRISTIAN GARVE (1742-98) one of the best writers among the popular philosophers, thus briefly describes the deistic creed accepted by himself and his friends:—

"The existence of God, as an intelligent and moral Being; the immortality of the soul; a belief that solely by means of our own moral improvement we can rise to the enjoyment of God's favour, and attain happiness in a life to come—these are the main articles of our creed."

MOSES MENDELSSOHN (1729-86) the friend of Nicolai and of Lessing, was an Israelite who, by hard study and a firm will, raised himself out of extreme poverty. He was eminently "the philosopher" of the school, though his speculations have no originality. His "Phædon," a dialogue on immortality, has for its substance Plato's argument. So far as he believed, Mendelssohn believed firmly. "Without faith in God," says he; "without trust in his providence, and a firm belief in the immortality of my soul, all the good things of this life would for me be contemptible; life itself

would be a journey to be made through stormy weather, and without a hope of ever reaching my home." Lavater, who longed to convert every man to his own Christian faith, thought that nothing could be easier than the conversion of Mendelssohn; but this was a great mistake. The popular philosopher held the few tenets preserved by rationalists who still called themselves Christians; but he was firm in his adherence to Judaism. His most remarkable book "Jerusalem" (1783) is an earnest protest against the union of Church and State.

Among the friends of Nicolai and Mendelssohn, one of the more eminent was JOHANN AUGUST EBERHARD (1739-1809). He was a Lutheran pastor, but one far advanced in the way of rationalism. In his chief book, a "New Apology of Socrates," he maintains that morality is, alike in heathen and in Christian lands, the only source of happiness. He then goes on to refute the notion that virtuous heathen men will be condemned on account of their doctrinal errors or defects. Socrates was the model philosopher of whom Eberhard and others of his school were never tired of writing. Their clear and precise knowledge of his character is remarkable.

It would be easy to add many names of writers who lived in Lessing's time, and held in common the few positive tenets asserted by Garve: but their names belong chiefly to literary history, and their writings are hardly noticeable as regards originality. Their neatness and clearness of style were qualities of much value in their time, and contributed largely to spread among the people a love of reading.

Among the most zealous men of their time, those who devoted themselves to the work of popular education must not be left unnoticed. Their zeal was kindled by the enthusiastic educational writings of Rousseau. Men, women, and children are all good at heart; remove the restrictions of a gloomy traditional faith; give them the simple tenets of a cheerful deistic and natural religion;

and the sure result will be a shining forth of heaven in the midst of this world. Such was the creed of the humanitarian deists. One of their leaders—Campe—placed beneath his bust of Rousseau the inscription—"my Saint!"

It should be remembered that before the days of triumphant deism much had been done for popular education in Prussia. The best work was done by the Pietists, under the patronage of Friederich Wilhelm I. His educational grant was small, but was more than he would expend on any luxury. His son, who liked the society of the atheist La Mettrie, and could enjoy the most audacious of his jokes, actually signed a decree prescribing "heartfelt prayer" as the first duty of a teacher. Under pietistic management, schools for the people had succeeded well on the whole, especially at Halle and in the neighbourhood; but there remained among Lutherans and Pietists some old severities of routine. These were identified with Christianity itself, as understood by Basedow and his friends. He therefore demanded a general educational reformation, of which the basis must be deism. His first aim was to establish a model college, or "Philanthropic Institute." To collect money for this purpose, he travelled widely, and found many friends. Soon afterwards Dr. Bahrdt and others were employed in the same way, and schools planned in imitation of the new model were seen rising in many places. At last deism was to produce something better than words. The work was planned, and to some extent the reformatory design was good. But where was the motive power to be found? Whence was to come the quiet endurance, the self-sacrifice required to make a good schoolmaster? Here, as in many projects of the eighteenth century, the understanding was idolized, while the soul was left without a true object of adoration.

In too many places it was soon discovered that work demanding Christian strength had been rashly undertaken by incapable men. Of all men in the world Basedow was

the last to make a good schoolmaster. His bad temper and rudeness soon became proverbial. Goethe, who knew him well, thus notices one of his leading traits :—

“He could not bear to see any man in a state of rest ; but would utter some rude contradiction, or assert some startling paradox, just in order to disturb us, whenever we were disposed to be quiet.” The restless, impatient temper of Basedow led to the ruin of his Philanthropic Institute. Other institutions of the same class were managed by men in some respects more competent—Campe, Pfeffel, Salzmann, Rochow—but they were not on the whole successful. On the other hand, considerable improvements were made in juvenile or educational literature ; but its character was mostly utilitarian, though partly sentimental.

There are critics of our own time who speak in a tone of general contempt respecting the deism of the eighteenth century, with its Pelagian philosophy, dogmatism, optimism, and openly declared sensualism. Others regard the revolutionary movement, of which the violence has for a time subsided, as but part of a large disturbance of which the effects remain, in the midst of which we are still living. The questions thus suggested are too large to be considered here ; but one remarkable fact, hardly likely to be called in question, may be noticed. Among the higher educated classes of France and Prussia in the last century it was accepted almost as an axiom, that as intelligence was more and more rapidly spreading, a decay of religion must take place in a like ratio of speed. Among the corresponding classes of our own time the hope of the eighteenth century has become the fear of the nineteenth.

Before this chapter is ended, something like a summary may be expected ; but the task of showing briefly all the destructive work of an antichristian century is one too vast to be attempted. The beginning of error—so far as it was intellectual—may however be indicated. This beginning—alike in England and in Germany—was an almost exclusive attention paid to studies of historical scriptural records.

On one side the deists sought everywhere for difficulties and contradictions; on the other side, the apologists collected all possible evidence in support of the historical records contained in the New Testament. Their formal logic may be shown thus:—

a. This evidence represents the credibility of Christianity.

b. This evidence is established.

c. The credibility of Christianity is established.

As to the first of the two premisses, the deists and the apologists were agreed. Not a word is said here respecting the truth of their arguments—on one side, or on the other—the point to be noticed is this:—They were agreed as to the general character of the evidence to be adduced in favour of Christianity; they paid, on both sides, much attention to the evidence so defined; but, comparatively speaking, they paid little attention to any other evidence. This is the assertion of a very large historical fact, and if confirmation can be required by any extensive reader, it will then be requisite to refer to the contents of whole libraries—English and German—including books of which many have already been named in preceding passages. But for the sake of brevity, one exception among English books may be named; for an exception so startling must surely go far toward the establishment of a rule.

About the time when deism in England was dying a natural death, or was leaving our shores, to haunt and disturb the Universities of Prussia, there was published (1742) a remarkable book written by a barrister—Henry Dodwell the younger—and entitled “Christianity Not Founded on Argument.” In certain respects, its views were extreme, or one-sided. The chief propositions were such as these:—“It is declared by Christian teachers, that faith is a duty; it is known that our Christian faith has been readily accepted by multitudes of men who have never had the talent, time, and learning required for examination of historical evidences. Now either the faith of these multitudes



has been vain, and founded on no evidence, or there exists prior evidence distinct from that set forth with so much learning by our apologists ; and this prior evidence must have the very character ascribed to the Author of our Faith ; it must remain, as yesterday, to-day, and for ever the same."

The writer goes on to appeal to such evidence as is at once spiritual and realistic, mystic and historical ; but there is nothing to be said here respecting the force of his appeal. The point to be noticed is this:—Dodwell's book called forth two or three replies, but was slightly noticed in England, as in Germany. Benson's "Reply" was translated into German and published in 1761. Leland could not see any force in the appeal ; indeed he could not understand it. Singularly, its force was seen, or its meaning understood, by one of the later deists—Thomas Chubb who, in his book entitled "The True Gospel of Christ" (1738) had asserted that Christianity, regarded as a life, rather than as history or doctrine, must be chiefly recommended by its obvious utility as a support of good morals. This of course was not Dodwell's meaning. Chubb, the deist, was a man of clear, strong common sense, and he could see the difference between Dodwell's notions and his own. Meanwhile, Christian apologists regarded Dodwell's book as hardly worthy of much notice. His appeal to the faith of myriads was a matter rather obscure, or one having little importance. There were at least a few readers who thought the book must be viewed as an ironical sneer against the faith of ignorant people.

The facts given indicate the malady at the heart of society that made formidable the later rationalism in Germany. The malady was spiritual ; the mere outbreak was intellectual. It was the eruptive stage of a disease that had long been concealed during the stages of incubation. There was in the heart a decay of faith, purity and love ; hence so much bewilderment in the understanding. The

inevitable result was foreseen by Bishop BEVERIDGE, when he wrote thus in his "Thoughts on Religion :"—

"I believe it is a thousand times easier for a worm, a fly, or any other such despicable insect whatsoever, to understand the affairs of men, than for the best of men, in a natural state, to apprehend the things of God."

It is remarkable : this, written in the seventeenth century, is exactly the thought suggested by Lessing, and forcibly appealing to the minds of many intelligent men, near the close of the eighteenth century, when the old rationalism was drawing near the final stage of its destructive career ; when Venturini and others among Bahrdt's followers issued their books, which contained neither proofs of sound learning nor novelties in argument, but for readers then too numerous were made attractive by new audacities of blasphemy. This general reference to many of the later deistic books published in Germany must suffice ; or if a word be added, it may be the following, borrowed from a writer especially well acquainted with the deistic literature of the eighteenth century :—

"They [the rationalistic writers] went on to the end. The Pelagian theologians of the time could say but little to show the need of a revelation, while the rationalists demanded that every dogma should be demonstrated as consonant with reason, or common sense. A total rejection of revelation was the result. The idea that men could require the aid of revelation was despised. The age, whose morality at best was eudaimonism, could see no advantage in a promised deliverance from the grasp of carnality. They did not feel themselves prisoners. That the very Power by whom the world was created should make manifest Himself, in order to save the world from ruin—this was a paradox for men who knew nothing of the ruin assumed as real and historical. They had their own fixed negations, and the chief was a denial of everything called supernatural ; and more, of everything that would now be called ideal, yet true. Rational men must accept no evidence, save that which is real. . . . So far did they go on in this way, that they lost utterly, at last, the faculty of seeing anything holy and morally beautiful in the Person of Christ. His grand idea of a Kingdom of God, to be established in

this world, they could not understand otherwise than by ascribing even to Him such secular motives as were recognized in their own sphere of thought. Consequently, the character of the Holy One himself was attacked. He was accused—as once before the High Priest, so now before Reason's tribunal—of ambition, self-seeking, and falsehood ; and, as then, so now again He was found ' guilty.'

"The whole process of doubt, denial, rejection, was made complete. Through all the descending stages of humiliation—once passed through in the course of actual life in this world—the Person of Christ, in idea, had now to pass again, in the minds of men. Once more He was tried ; now at the bar of reason ; He was stripped of his glory ; reason itself ascended the throne rightfully belonging to Him in His Church ; once more He was numbered with sinners ; the sentence of condemnation was pronounced against Him. What follows ?—As of old, the way of humiliation is made the road to victory, ascension, glory—a glory that will be brighter than that of his first appearance in this world. After his death follows his resurrection."—DORNER.

CHAPTER IV.

LESSING.

GOTTHOLD EPHRAIM LESSING, the son of a Lutheran pastor, was born in 1729 at Kamenz, a small town in Saxony. His studies commenced in a classical school at Meissen, and were continued at Leipzig. He took his Magister degree at Wittenberg in 1751. In the years 1753-60 he lived mostly in Berlin, where he was associated in literary work with Nicolai and Mendelssohn. In 1760-65 he was employed as a secretary at Breslau, but found leisure to pursue his studies, which were especially devoted to dramatic literature. In 1767 he went to Hamburg, to assist in an endeavour to establish there a national drama. The endeavour itself was a failure, and its best result was his "Dramaturgie," a series of critical papers, first published in the shape of a theatrical journal. At Hamburg he became acquainted with Johann Melchior Goetze, an orthodox Lutheran pastor of some learning, who was surprised to find that a dramatic critic could speak with intelligence on religious and ecclesiastical questions. With Reimarus—already named as the author of a book now notorious—Lessing, during the year 1767, was but slightly acquainted. In the following year Reimarus died, leaving a son and a daughter, to whose care was confided the manuscript of the work on which the leisure of twenty years or more had been expended. It was the most elaborate of all the attacks made on the Bible in the course of the eighteenth century. In the presence of Lessing, the whole or a considerable part of the manuscript was read, while its authorship was regarded as a secret never to be divulged. To Lessing it was obvious that the agitation

which its publication must excite would be extreme. In its extent of negation the book was like the well-known work published by Strauss in 1835; but the plan was wholly different. Instead of the series of myths supposed by Strauss, deliberate imposition is supposed by Reimarus.

It seems probable that Elise Reimarus, the daughter, confided to the care of Lessing the "Fragments," or selected parts of the work, which he published in the course of the years 1774-8. The secret of authorship was long preserved, though the truth was now and then guessed. In 1814 J. A. H. Reimarus, the son, presented to the Library of Göttingen a manuscript copy of the complete work, and then first stated the fact that his father, Samuel Hermann Reimarus (born 1694), was the author. Strauss published in 1862 a very copious analysis of the entire work.

Of the fragments published by Lessing, the last, entitled "The Aim of Jesu and his Disciples," especially served to excite controversy. The orthodox pastor Goetze of Hamburg, who had formerly treated Lessing as a friend, was now one of the first to censure his conduct in issuing the anonymous "Fragments." This censure called forth Lessing's vindictory letters collectively entitled "Anti-Goetze." These and other results of the controversy are noticed here only in their relation to the position which Lessing soon afterwards assumed. "May we not," he said in effect, "fairly consider the historical difficulties shown by Reimarus, and yet avoid coming to his conclusion?"

Virtually, but in various forms, this question has been often repeated since Lessing's time. This is the distinct question by which we are led away from the comparatively dogmatic deism of the eighteenth century, to the religious philosophy of the nineteenth. The latter begins indeed with Lessing's attempt to answer his own question; for here he anticipated the thoughts of later writers. If one general tendency has pervaded the whole controversy begun in his day, it has been a wish or intention to avoid everything like a return to the position held by Reimarus. This intention was made

evident, for example, in 1864, when Strauss published his reconstructed "Life of Jesus," a work that—as regards what is new or improved in the general argument—may be described as an attempted concordance of two theories: one the myth-theory, belonging especially to Strauss, the other a theory of development of which F. Baur was the author, though it had been suggested by Semler. The general aim of the book is to reject, to a very large extent, the historical evidences of Christianity; and yet avoid a return to the position held by Reimarus. This general aim, reduced to the less distinct character of a tendency, and sometimes obeyed unconsciously, has more or less governed the reasonings of several later writers on speculative theology. Hence we find one of Lessing's principles recognized in the doctrine that man is capable of accepting a divine revelation, and requires it; another of his principles is reasserted when we are assured that a revelation of his own will is an act consonant with our highest conception of God, and to be regarded as one inevitably springing forth out of his own essence, which is love. And when we come to the question of a medium of revelation, we find the difficulty left unsolved by Lessing still remaining unsolved. It is this:—on one side, to shun everything like a return to the position held by Reimarus; on the other, to refuse full acceptation of the historic and dogmatic tenet, "There is one mediator between God and man." The various attempts made to find out another middle way must be described in later pages; here the aim is to show, in a prefatory style, the scope of the controversy, of which a first outline was given by Lessing. Since his time the question has been made at once more comprehensive, and in certain respects more definite. On one side, not altogether vainly has philosophy endeavoured to explore the depths, intellectual and moral, of our human nature; on the other side, just in proportion as our tone in controversy has become more respectful toward mankind, and more reverential toward God, so has our common idea of that which constitutes a divine revelation

been elevated and expanded. Whatever the differences still left among thoughtful and religious men in our times, it may be generally said of them that their thoughts and feelings are far removed from the cold, hard, dry deism prevalent in the time of Lessing. They have deeper views respecting our capacity for receiving and recognizing a divine revelation; and higher views of the revelation required.

The deism of his time, as estimated by Lessing himself, was mostly a series of bare negations, and served chiefly to make room for an extraordinary display of egoism and self-conceit. Heaven was made lower, in order that several small men might seem taller, while among them Lessing appeared as a giant, whom they wished to reduce as nearly as possible to the level of their own intellectual and moral stature. The deists called "old rationalists" were willing, however, to concede to him one especial honour—the honour of a first place in a class represented by such names as Teller, Nicolai, Biester, Gedicke, and Bahrdt. Their error was corrected; but in later times Lessing has been called a deist, a pantheist, and a rationalist of the old school, while his well-known love of polemical excitement has led certain hasty critics to the conclusion that he published the "Wolfenbüttel Fragments," and entered into the subsequent dispute, mainly if not solely in order to display his prowess and skill in literary warfare. True, there are passages to be found in his later writings that may seem to support these several notions. There are many passages justly described as negative, and more that must be called sceptical; but his most serious writings, fairly read and interpreted, have their own general tone and tendency, strongly opposed to the self-complacent autonomy of the writers with whom he has too often been classed. His preference was to live for ever under the rule of the old orthodoxy, rather than under the tumultuous despotism of such freethinkers as Basedow and Bahrdt. Among the deistic writers of his day there were distinctions of character not unimportant; but as regards

their general tendency they were all men of one school—a school to which Lessing did not belong. His sympathies were too wide, his intellect at once too comprehensive and too clear, his soul too deeply capable of both love and reverence. He could not accept fully the historical evidences of Christianity, as usually adduced on the side of orthodoxy; but his failure of belief was not proclaimed in a tone of triumph. To use his own words—familiar but not trivial—between himself and the Christian religion, whose spiritual and moral aims he recognized as the highest possible, there lay “an ugly broad trench” of doubt, especially as regards the inspiration of the four Gospels, and their consequent authority as historical scriptures. He earnestly asked for aid in passing over this “trench;” but, as he tells us, he found none. In other words, he could not accept historical Christianity as founded on the inspiration and authority of the New Testament. He remained an earnest inquirer, and wished that the controversy he had excited by publishing the “Fragments,” might go on, and lead at last to some good results. Meanwhile, as he has told us, he could wait quietly for the issue, and without sharing in the alarm expressed by some of his contemporaries; for he had made, first of all, a wide distinction between the internal substance of the Christian religion and its external or historical evidences. The former he regarded as eternal and divine; the latter as necessarily doubtful in certain respects.

Hence he was led on to contend that Christianity itself would not be refuted, even if orthodox doctrine respecting the inspiration of the New Testament were yielded as untenable. He adduced the fact that, for a long time, the unwritten traditions of the Early Church, collectively regarded as a rule of faith, had well supplied the want of scriptural authority. It is implied therefore, said he, that, were all the scriptures of the New Testament found invalid as historical testimony, there would remain the existence and the development of the Early Church, as a great fact to be accounted for. Such continuation of Lessing’s argument

as might lead far into the question of ecclesiastical tradition and authority, has been for the most part avoided on both sides of the later controversy, while philosophy and biblical criticism have mainly assumed predominance.

It should be noticed, at least in a passing way, that several of Lessing's utterances, found in his later writings, have been falsely isolated, and hastily accepted as full and final expressions of deliberate convictions. Too much has been made of his brief essay predicting the coming of a time when all religious doctrines and precepts will be summarized in the last will and testament of St. John: "Children, love one another." Again, as regards theological controversy, too much has been said about "Nathan," a drama in form, but in purport an able plea for religious toleration. It is eloquent, and the well-known scene of "the three rings" is remarkably effective, when read with due emphasis. But the representatives of the three religions are not fairly chosen, and the didactic purpose, everywhere active, limits too closely the exercise of such poetic power as the writer possessed. He was not a poet in the highest sense of the word. If he had been born a poet, the high culture of his critical intellect, and the character of the controversy that occupied so much of his later years, might have been enough to suppress the development of his poetic genius. As to this drama of "Nathan," there should be added the fact, that its tone accords well with the writer's own practice of toleration. When direct persecution, in his time, had for its objects the tenets and sentiments of the people called Moravians—whose personal characters were not spared—Lessing took their part, though he had no sympathy with the tone of their piety. "I hate," said he, on another occasion, "the people who wish to institute new sects; for it is not mere error, but sectarian error—aye, and sectarian truth—that makes men miserable. . . . Let but these shallow heads [the rationalists] get the upper hand, and we shall soon

have a tyranny worse than anything endured under the rule of old orthodoxy."

To find Lessing's own deliberate and speculative views on religion, we must study his essay "On the Education of Mankind." As introductory to its analysis there may first be given a few noticeable passages, selected from his writings, and leading on toward one thought, repeated often, or often implied in his later reasonings—a thought that may be regarded as the basis of his religious philosophy.

"The more one tries to demonstrate for me the truth of Christianity, the more sceptical I grow about it; and the more another treads it down beneath his feet, the more firmly am I resolved to cherish it in my heart. . . . Arguments against the letter of Christianity are not valid against the religion itself, which surely existed before the time when its records were written." "There is a certain submission of reason demanded by the very nature of a revelation; and in yielding that submission, when the reality of revelation is acknowledged, reason expresses only a just conviction of its own limitations. Granting a revelation made, the fact of its containing truth transcending our reason should be an argument in favour of, not an objection against the revelation. What would it be if it revealed nothing?"

"Revelation," said Lessing, "must be gradual, or progressive, and must begin in a positive form, and with the assertion of some external authority; but it is not to be identified with any one positive form. It is the one pervading spirit that, throughout all forms, remains ever required and ever authoritative. The same pervading mind, or spirit, awakens in us the aspiration called religion, which has for its proper organ, not so much the understanding as the heart. Religious aspiration leads us on to seek for, and to accept revelation. The substance of religion consists of eternal truths, having authority *in themselves*, independent of their historical evidence." Here is mysticism, or idealism, not unlike that asserted by F. H. Jacobi.

Having such views, Lessing could publish the "Fragments" left by Reimarus, and could witness the ensuing controversy, without a fear lest Christianity itself should

perish in the strife. That his natural taste for polemical excitement was partly his motive, is not denied. He had asserted that internal or spiritual evidence should be predominant, while for the combatants arrayed on both sides historical evidence was everything. He therefore found, in all probability, some pleasure, while as an umpire he viewed—not altogether calmly—the difficulties of their respective positions and the defects of their reasonings. Clearly he did not accept as his own the premisses assumed by Reimarus in his denial of the resurrection.

Here, in face of overwhelming evidence on the opposite side, the utmost possible use was made of certain “contradictions” found, it was said, in the four narratives of that event. “Are these,” he asks, “such contradictions as no fair exposition can make accordant with the general truth of the testimony in which the four writers all concur?—If to this question we reply ‘no,’ our decision has in its favour, at least, this one great fact: the cause to be lost, if that testimony were found to be false—to be won, were it found to be true—has been won. Christianity has triumphed over heathenism, and over Judaism.”—These few words set in contrast, on one side, the special doubts of the fragmentist; on the other a gigantic fact of which modern history is the record. For nearly two thousand years Christianity has existed in the world as a spiritual power, in whose presence empires have faded away.

Enough has been said to show that Lessing—whatever his doubts and difficulties—was a man not to be classed with the ordinary rationalists of his time. While they remained contented in the midst of desolation, his scepticism, in his later days, had sorrow for a companion. While they claimed him as their friend and champion, he was dwelling far apart, in a world of his own thoughts; and for solace was looking far away, and out of his own times, into the future. There, as he trusted, would some day appear that “new eternal revelation” which, he says, “is promised in the elementary scriptures of the New Testament,” and

“will surely come.” But if we read rightly, this new revelation must be some expansion of Christianity; for this, he says, in another place, is “the religion that, in all probability, will endure as long as men continue to exist and feel their need of a Mediator between mankind and God.”

The question suggested here is threefold: what are the meanings which Lessing attaches to the words “Christianity” and “Revelation?” and what does he mean when he speaks of our need of a Mediator? In order to find replies, there must first be given an analysis of his essay on “The Education of Mankind.”

In Lessing’s idea of revelation, already briefly defined, it is implied, that the moral guidance required by mankind is given by means of a gradual revelation, which has three epochs, corresponding with three periods of history—childhood, youth, and manhood. This general idea must be more distinctly noticed. First it should be observed, that of any absolute or eternal opposition of reason and revelation Lessing knows nothing. He holds that it belongs to the province of revelation to make known in an earlier time, and in a way easy for the people of that time, truth that in a later time might be discovered by educated reason. This is partly a republication of doctrine taught by several of the early fathers, as well as by the schoolmen, Anselm and Aquinas; but Lessing in his general intention goes farther than the schoolmen, as may be inferred from some of his remarks on the period of “manhood.” He suggests that obedience will then be our happiness, when we shall clearly know that in obeying God we are but acting in accordance with the laws of our own nature. On some bolder expressions of the same truth certain critics have founded a charge of pantheism, which may be alluded to again in another place; but first must be noticed what Lessing says of that indispensable stage in the evolution of human nature—childhood; then must follow an abstract of his remarks respecting the religious education of youth and manhood.

A capacity for receiving truth is obviously distinct from a power of discovering it. The former belongs to man in the early period of his moral education ; but the latter is a power then latent. At such a time, moral guidance must bear the character of a revelation. Thus in their period of childhood, the ancient people of Israel received for their guidance in moral and physical life the truths of the Old Testament. The unity of God was here revealed to a rude people, in some respects less educated than their polytheistic neighbours. A sure and clear code of moral laws was established, and obedience was enforced by rewards and punishments—both temporal ; but the immortality of the soul was not revealed. These remarks obviously relate chiefly to the books known by their collective title—"the Law."

Christianity is a higher revelation, and one especially intended to afford guidance during a period of human history that may be called youth. Our motives now are nobler, more expansive ; immortality is our destination ; we are invited to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, and therefore virtues greater than any that can be demanded by any civil authority must now be ours. This world neither can, nor will reward us ; our reward, reserved in Heaven, is to be everlasting—one that can be prefigured by no earthly joys. The prize to be won is now so high, that our duty—leaving all and following Christ—is called "light" and "easy." Still a reward is expected, and therefore, says Lessing, this stage of revelation is not perfect.

Next will come, he says, the religion of manhood. Impelled only by a pure love of God and man, we shall do good, and expect no reward, save what is found in goodness itself. "Will it never come?" says Lessing, with an impassioned tone, "that age of light and purity of heart? Never?—Let me not entertain the doubt. Surely, there will some day be revealed that Eternal Gospel promised in the New Testament." This is a remarkable passage ; the writer ascribes to the Christian Religion itself the defective

development for which we ourselves are responsible. The error that would look into the future, to find a religion of manhood, is surely refuted by the question, Was not St. Paul "a man in Christ?" But Lessing's words may possibly be construed as consistent with a belief that the future religion of which he speaks will be an expanded knowledge and realization of true Christianity—not "another Gospel."

The educational process thus described must indeed seem slow, and on this account mysterious; but the straight line, says Lessing, is not always practically the shortest. How do we know all that Providence has to do for mankind, besides leading them onwards? How do we know that seeming deviations from the direct line of progress, and even some apparent retrogressions, are not required by the whole design of which our welfare is a part? In some stages of the process time seems to be wasted; but the loss must not be deplored too bitterly; "for is not the whole of eternity still ours?"—To show the force of this query, a rather singular fact must be named: Lessing had a firm belief in the general truth of Platonic teaching respecting transmigrations of the soul. He could therefore imagine, that many who have patiently lived on through dark times, may return, and enjoy the daylight that will at last appear.

We are now led to the main question suggested by Lessing's theological writings. How is the moral and spiritual truth, the power, the authority of Christianity to be maintained, when so much has been done to diminish the force of its historical evidences? This, though the words are ours, may fairly be called Lessing's question: and if one more word be required, to take him away—so to speak—out of the crowd of lower men with whom he was unhappily associated, it is here: this was for him an earnest question. Thus out of his moral solitude he writes to one of his "friends:"—"All the liberty you enjoy at Berlin is your liberty of insulting grossly all that is Christian." On the other hand, he writes thus of his own religious instinct, which was even more powerful than his understanding:—

“My desire to be convinced [respecting the inspiration, and the consequent historical authority of the Gospels] is nothing less than a hunger, that would take in almost anything having a semblance of food. Doubt upon this point is the ugly wide trench that I cannot cross, though so often and so earnestly I have made the attempt to leap over it. If any man can help me here, let him do it; I pray, nay adjure him to do it; and if he can, he will surely win thereby the blessing of God.”

These words do not express the doubt of the idle reasoner, whose scepticism masks egotism and sensuality; these are words spoken by one of the greatest men of his century. The fact makes it the more important that first we should well understand his own answer to his own question, and secondly, that we should attempt to make definite other and later answers; and this will be done best if we employ with regard to each the same process of analysis by which Lessing's own answer, considered in all its relations, is first to be made as clear as possible. In substance this answer has already been given in the shape of an analysis of his *multum in parvo*—the small and pregnant essay on the “Education of Mankind.” For him Christianity is one very important part in a vast organism of gradual revelation; and the grand aim of this revelation is to establish all over the world one religion, of which the creed will finally be reduced to a summary in these few words:—“Children, love one another.” This anticipated conclusion is more distinctly shown in one of the conversations entitled “Ernst und Falk” (1778). States or nations, says Falk—in fact Lessing himself—must have their boundaries, and their several tendencies to make themselves insular. Their relations with one another are therefore ever in danger of assuming a hostile character. What is wanted to prevent, first moral differences, then actual division and warfare, is a firm, wide-spread union of Catholic men, whose sympathies have no local boundaries, and whose good will embraces all the world. It might be supposed that our Christian religion, as actually existing, should supply such an adamantine bond of nations; but unhappily—Falk continues—instead of religion, we now

have religions, that have made even wider the separation of nation from nation. Hence the want of a free union of men, meeting together not as German, and French and English representatives, but simply as men, and all united, not only by such sympathy as makes the bond of "an invisible church," but also by a firm and practical organization, founded on the catholic ideas of their own common faith.

The argument in this conversation is very skilfully conducted; while its force depends utterly on the acceptance of the word "men." Of course they are to be educated men; but how are they to be educated? By Christ?—or by their own reason? This at once leads to the question, What does Lessing mean by "revelation"? It has been rather too boldly affirmed by a critic—Hettner—that Lessing's "revelation" is but a self-expansion or a natural evolution of reason. His teaching—says the same critic—is after all, but a disguised pantheism, in which "revelation" is an exoteric synonym for evolution. These remarks are not duly respectful; however it is well known that in his later years Lessing was a diligent reader of the writings of Spinoza; and partly on this ground is founded the charge here indicated—that his own creed was Spinozism, which was disguised in order to shun persecution. It is unpleasant to quote such words as "disguised," "exoteric" and "esoteric," when we write of Lessing; but it is at once granted, that the evidences adduced in support of the implied charge are apparently considerable, including several passages in Lessing's own writings, and moreover a declaration made by his friend F. H. Jacobi—a man whose character was morally noble. There can be no doubt respecting the sincerity of his belief, when he affirmed that Lessing's later creed was Spinozism.

Neither neglect, nor any slight study of the evidences named here is implied, when the conclusion that "Lessing was a pantheist," is firmly rejected. At the same time, no attempt is made to show that the opinions expressed in his various theological writings—to a large extent polemical—are consistent with one another. His versatility was almost

as remarkable as the clearness of his intellect, and on some points he always remained an inquirer, as he confessed even in his later years. There is rest in pantheism, though it may be the repose of an apathetic despair; Lessing—it is sad to say it—did *not* find rest. Though he was the son of a pious Lutheran pastor, who translated Tillotson's sermons, he soon turned away from the beaten path of orthodoxy. During his earlier years of study, he considered the claims preferred by the "freethinkers," and read the writings of several among the English deists. When hardly more than twenty-four years old, he wrote an essay on religious mysteries, showing how they had been first revealed, in order that they might be afterwards understood. Rather later, he published a paper asserting that good morals might be maintained without the support of religion. Another of his earlier essays contends, that those who reject the Christian religion should give some reasonable account of its origin and early promulgation. Accordingly, he soon afterwards wrote the account desiderated, and thus gave proof of one fact—that he had studied well the fifteenth and sixteenth chapters of Gibbon's well-known work. In another paper Lessing defended the union of Church and State. His principle—that such union was inevitable—was better than the territorial principle of expediency maintained by his senior contemporary, Möser, a rationalist who hated all openly declared heterodoxy, and recommended orthodoxy as an *instrumentum regni*. But enough has been said to show how wide was the range of Lessing's studies. There remains still to be noticed, as closely connected with his theological writings, his drama of "Nathan"—the book by which his fame was most widely spread. It is, however, here regarded only as a plea in behalf of religious toleration; not as a proof of the alleged fact, that the author, near the close of his life rejected all positive religion.

The action belongs to the time of Saladin; and the chief actors are Nathan, a Jew of the best moral type, Recha, a Jewess of the same type, and Saladin, Sultan of

Egypt and Syria—these on the side of Judaism and Islam ; on the Christian side, first a bigot Patriarch, who would burn the Jew, next a Templar, and thirdly a pious monk. The purport of the whole drama is given in one scene—that in which the Jew narrates the parable of “the three rings.” Saladin has named the three creeds professed in his territories, and has asked for Nathan’s judgment respecting their different claims. The Jew now, in a prefatory way, recites the parable. There lived, says he, in an eastern land a certain wealthy man whose dearest possession was a charm—an opal of many tints, well set in a ring of fine gold. This precious ring could make its wearer beloved by God and by man. When death was near, the rich man was perplexed by the question, to whom should he bequeath the ring ; for he had three sons, all dutiful, and all alike beloved. The possessor of the opal was to be regarded, henceforth, as the head of the family. The father could not concentrate his love ; he therefore—some time before his decease—had made for him two perfect copies of the true, original gem ; and of the three rings, all apparently alike, one was bequeathed to each of the sons. The sequel may be partly guessed. A dispute followed ; each asserted his claim as head of the family ; each brought into court the “true, original ring ;” and—says Nathan—

“ To find the first true ring,
It was as great a puzzle as for us
To find the one true faith.”

Of the three brothers each accused the other two of fraud, and so well balanced was the evidence, that each in his turn appeared as the true claimant. “What could the judge say ?” Saladin inquired ; and thus Nathan concludes the parable :—

Thus said the judge :—“ Go, bring your father here ;
Let him come forth ! or I dismiss the case.
Must I sit guessing riddles !—must I wait
Till the true ring shall speak out for itself ?—

But stay!—'twas said that the authentic gem
 Had virtue that could make its wearer loved
 By God and man. That shall decide the case.
 Tell me who of the three is best beloved
 By his two brethren. Silent?—Then the ring
 Hath lost its charm!—Each claimant loves himself,
 But wins no love. The rings are forgeries;
 'Tis plain: the first, authentic gem was lost;
 To keep his word with you, and hide his loss,
 Your father had these three rings made—these three,
 Instead of one—”

Saladin. Well spoken, judge, at last!

Nathan. “But stay,” the judge continued:—“hear one word—
 The best advice I have to give; then go.
 Let each still trust the ring given by his father!
 It might be, he would show no partial love;
 He loved all three, and, therefore, would not give
 The ring to one and grieve the other two.
 Go, emulate your father's equal love.
 Let each first test his ring and show its power;
 But aid it, while you test; be merciful,
 Forbearing, kind to all men, and submit
 Your will to God. Such virtues shall increase
 Whatever powers the rings themselves may have.
 When these, among your late posterity,
 Have shown their virtue—in some future time,
 A thousand thousand years away from now—
 Then hither come again!—A wiser man
 Than one now sitting here will hear you then,
 And will pronounce the sentence—”

Saladin. Allah! Allah!

Nathan. Now, Saladin, art thou that “wiser man?”
 Art thou the judge who will, at last, pronounce
 The sentence?—

[*Saladin grasps Nathan's hand, and holds it to the
 end of the conversation.*]

Saladin. I the judge?—I'm dust! I'm nothing!
 'Tis Allah!—*Nathan*, now I understand;
 The thousand thousand years have not yet passed;
 The Judge is not yet come; I must not place
 Myself upon His throne!

“Nathan” was completed in 1779, when the author was

an almost worn-out man. He was only fifty years old; but domestic grief, polemical excitement, and much vexation in his later years, made him prematurely old. He said little, but suffered deeply, when (1778) he suddenly lost at once his wife and his only child. "There still remains for me," said he, "work to be done, and to some degree this may serve as an opiate." Meanwhile his publication of the "Fragments" had excited the displeasure of several persons who had once been numbered among his friends and acquaintances, and in his gloomy mood of mind he complained that all the world was forsaking him. Yet now and then a word of challenge, or friendly provocation, could arouse in the old gladiator something like his former love of combat. Thus he was one day led into the conversation on which has been mainly founded the charge of pantheism. His friend Jacobi had directed his attention to "Prometheus," one of Goethe's earlier poems, in which defiant words are addressed to Zeus, the despot of Greek mythology. When his friend had observed that the lines were pantheistic in their tone, Lessing replied to the effect that they expressed his own sentiments. "Then you agree with Spinoza?" said Jacobi, whose own creed might fairly be called theism. As reported by himself, the answer to his question was as follows:—"If I must name myself after the master of any school, that is the name." The following are some further passages in the same conversation, given as reported by Jacobi:—

"I believe," says he, "in an intelligent and personal Cause of the universe."

L. "All the better! Now I shall hear something new" [*i.e.* in the way of an argument].

J. "You must not be too hopeful of that; for I help myself out of all my difficulties of reasoning by a *salto mortale* . . . Thus I escape at once from the logic of fatalism, and all that belongs to it."

L. "You would assert your freedom of will. Well; I hardly care to assert it on my part . . . You will not follow Spinoza, though you must see the force of his logic?"

J. "Just so; and I owe him some thanks; for he has shown me

the end [fatalism] to which all such reasoning as his own must lead. Where I see that, I at once make an end of reasoning, and take things as they are [*i.e.* as they are intuitively seen]. In other words, my philosophy ends there: I cease reasoning—and believe.”

L. “I do not altogether dislike your *salto mortale*—your bold leap to get away from a fatalistic consequence. I wish you would take me along with you.”

J. “Well, if you will but step upon my spring-board.”

L. “Ah; but that itself would be a leap, and one too bold for my weary limbs and my heavy head.”

Not long after the time when this conversation took place, Lessing died (1781), and soon afterwards Jacobi published his belief that the author of “Nathan” was, in his later years, a pantheist. One fact alone should have prevented the rash conclusion; Jacobi knew that his friend had long believed generally in Plato’s doctrine respecting transmigrations of souls. The theory of Spinozism could not be held consistently with this Platonic notion. Jacobi’s publication surprised and grieved some few of Lessing’s old friends, especially one true friend—the Jew, whose own character suggested that of “Nathan.” This was Moses Mendelssohn, now an invalid, who bravely came forward to repel the charge, and expended almost his last reserve of strength in the controversy that followed. Here may be added an extract from a letter written by Jacobi in 1781:—

“How far, I would like to know, was vexation the cause of Lessing’s death? In his later years he was deeply afflicted with melancholy. Never shall I forget one morning, not along ago, when I passed some few hours in his company. In the course of our conversation some discussion arose, and on one point so clearly had I the best side of the argument, that he could give me no reply. At that moment, the expression that passed over his face was terrible; I had never before seen anything like it. However, it soon passed away, the drift of our discourse was changed, and he talked again confidently, but sorrowfully, telling me how all the world had now forsaken him; how especially one person—formerly a dear friend—would no longer recognize him.”

This passage may possibly cast some light on that first

discursive and half-humorous conversation. "Pantheism" was probably the question in this later conversation. Jacobi was too much prone to introduce that question, and it is quite obvious that his friend was melancholy and weary when he was so completely defeated. Enough has been said to show that here is no evidence demanding notice, when we are speaking of Lessing's serious belief in the truth of the doctrine called Spinozism or pantheism. Yet a word may be added: he knew that the teaching of Spinoza—however incorrect—was distinct from the vague and vulgar notions collectively called pantheism; again, he knew well, that Spinoza's ideas respecting the Person of Christ were less objectionable than some notions spread by rationalists, and were quite as reverent as any thoughts entertained even by Jacobi himself. The main facts of the case were these: Lessing—himself an intellectually aristocratic man—venerated genius. He sometimes heard ignorant persons talking very freely about the metaphysical Israelite, and naturally feeling annoyance, he would say to himself:—" *Sie treten ihm zu nahe.*" (They are hardly respectful enough to the man.) On a certain occasion, when declamatory language of unusual violence had been employed, Lessing said, openly enough:—"They treat Spinoza as if he were a dead dog."—Of course such sayings were reported; their supposed intention was confirmed by certain interpretations of a few passages found in Lessing's writings; and then Jacobi added his erroneous evidence. Thus at last it was concluded by some people that Lessing—a writer eminently clear, bold, and honest—intended to say he was a pantheist, when he wrote to all intents and purposes as a theist. Of such expositors and critics one can only say again:—" *Sie treten ihm zu nahe.*"

It has been suggested (c. ii.) that the argument employed by St. Paul, when preaching on Mars' Hill, is the best by which Christianity can be recommended. Some approach to the leading principle of that argument is seen in Lessing's educational theory of religion. Several of his other theo-

logical writings have been named, but we make no attempt to show how they may be understood as parts of one consistent whole. His general idea—that a progressive clearness in the manifestation of divine truth may be reasonably expected, and that it will take place, step by step, in perfect accordance with the true evolution of human nature—remains to be noticed still further, but only as leading to one question. To this one question later writers on religious philosophy have more or less referred, and their arguments may be generally defined as so many attempts made to answer the chief question suggested by Lessing:—Will Christianity be our final religion?

It will be convenient, when the views of later writers come to be noticed, to employ mainly the same plan of classification that is here first employed in the analysis of Lessing's idea of educational religion; and this will now be considered, in its several relations with ethics, authority, and mediation. Very little will be said respecting the ethical character of the idea, which in itself is threefold. In the first period, we have the ethics described as belonging to the religion of childhood; and these are pure, especially as compared with the moral condition of the peoples by whom the Jews in ancient times were surrounded. In the second period we have the ethics of Christianity, and of these again little remains to be said. But in the third period—still future—we read of ethics purer than those recognized as belonging to our present Christian Religion. Will that apparently far-off time, when love alone will reign, belong to Christ? Here is the chief question; and it will present itself again and again, as we go on in the analysis of Lessing's educational idea.

We have seen how, with certain restrictions, this idea may be held as one accordant with a firm belief in the fact that a revelation has been made; but Christianity has claimed for itself the character of a final revelation. As it did not owe its origin to any discovery made by human reason, so—we are told—it will not fade away, even before the noonday

light of our reason. In this world—despite all the unfavourable signs of these latter times—it may soon be very widely spread, or it may soon be “diminished and brought low;” but it can never change as regards its central tenet, which must remain ever the same—as yesterday, so to-day and for ever. This is the position assumed by the Christian Faith.

It is not said that Lessing’s idea must imply that an essential change is to be made in Christianity, in order that his prophecy of a third religious period may be fulfilled; but it is affirmed that the question, “Will Christianity pass away?” was left by him an open question, and since his time has been deeply studied. With this question modern religious philosophy, in Germany, is for the most part closely connected.

Next must be noticed the question: to what authority does Lessing chiefly refer?—to the scriptures of the Old Testament and the New?—to the Church?—or to reason? If a brief reply is to be given, it may be this:—he refers chiefly to the final authority of reason; but our reason, he adds, must first be educated by means of revelation and history, before it can safely be allowed to assert its own autonomy. When truly and patiently educated, under the care of Providence, reason will at last recognize *itself*—its own best conclusions—certainly in the ethics of the Christian Religion, and probably also in some of the tenets now regarded as mysteries. The main question returns, here as elsewhere: Will the religion of the future—based as it will be on the autonomy of reason—appear as a new expansion of the Gospel?—or as “another Gospel?” Several apparent replies may be found in the various passages of Lessing’s writings already briefly noticed; but he gives us no clear, final reply.

Lessing’s idea of educational religion is next to be noticed in its relation to the Christian doctrine of mediation. Divine mercy, he says, pardons sins, and in so doing has respect to the offering of a perfect obedience. The Chris-

tian Religion—he adds in another place—will in all probability endure as long as men feel their need of a Mediator between God and man—that is to say, it may exist for ever. This remark does not assure us of the writer's own belief, but is connected with his comparative estimate of several arguments adduced for the support of faith. He admits the fact that human nature is corrupted; and this leads him to the conclusion that divine truth must first appear as a revelation; but here is found no reference to the Christian doctrine of mediation. He speaks of eternal truths, commending themselves by their own intrinsic character, and requiring no further evidence; but these are the moral precepts of our religion. His positive views are mostly ethical. Of mediation he says little; and nothing of the personal faith demanded by orthodox Lutheranism. He recognizes the importance of personal convictions, whose testimony is too strong to be disturbed by doubt; but here again he is speaking of ethical sentiments—above all, of those which he tells us were predominant in the “Religion of Christ,” but are too little known and felt in our so-called “Christian Religion.” Yet he gives us no clear account of their difference. For some centuries, he says, an oral and traditional *regula fidei* served as the bond of union among Christians. This suggestive remark might naturally lead to inquiry respecting the chief tenets and the development of the early Church. It might be expected that Lessing would next show how and when the “Religion of Christ” was changed into the “Christian Religion.” But his historical remark has a merely polemical use; he is criticizing certain extreme Lutheran tenets respecting the authority of Scripture; accordingly he refers to the time when orthodoxy—or rather fidelity to Christ—was preserved without the aid of Scripture.

Lessing's polemical writings are partly fragmentary, and contain passages telling us little respecting his own belief. Among all the critics of his age, he was the clearest; yet the consistency of his own assertions—taken one with

another—is not always as clear as his admirable style of writing. His supposed belief has been too boldly, and at the same time too narrowly, defined by several writers, whose sources of information are but scanty. Of the Person of Christ, as of his life and his death—considered as subjects of historical inquiry—Lessing said comparatively little: it has therefore been affirmed that he was merely “a deist.” This hasty assertion is not implied now, when it is added that his silence on these points was in one respect remarkable. In the controversy following his publication of the “Fragments,” there was on the antichristian side no deficiency of such power of attack as, at that time, was sure to be effective. Yet it was nothing as compared with the power that Lessing *might* have displayed on the side of the defence. There was spread then among pious people an alarm resembling a panic; it was felt that the last inner wall—nay, the very heart—of the Christian fortress was assailed, while its defenders were, for the most part, but feeble men. Lessing rather coldly observed that the attack was somewhat less formidable than was supposed; and meanwhile the chief command on the side of the defence was left to be assumed by a leader no better than Semler.

There are apparent contradictions here and there to be observed in Lessing’s writings. Analytical clearness of intellect was his predominant faculty; but he was a man in whom the intellect did not suppress the heart. His character was at once sceptic and mystic. He had a sympathy with the faith that in his day was so much misrepresented and derided. However clear he might be when writing on questions of less interest, he was not always clear when reviewing the arguments brought forward in his day for and against religion. That a faith endowed with a divine ethical power—a faith whose continuance in such a world as ours is a perpetual miracle—must after all be rejected on account of historical doubts: this was one great difficulty. Again it was hard to understand why—if it must pass away—no

good building should ever follow any demolition of this faith. When will they build up anything like it? These are not Lessing's words; but they express the tone of one of his letters. It was written in 1777, and was addressed to his brother, who had described as "smatterers" even the best champions of Christianity. "No, no!" said Lessing, "there I cannot follow you. The 'smatterers' are found on the other side, and there too you will find the most illiberal men among all the foes of philosophy."

To conclude—Lessing was not altogether unlike his friend Jacobi. The latter accepted no positive religion. For him revelation was a light ever shining forth from God, and passing through various *media*—from soul to soul, in all ages, in all lands—yet shining out with a peculiar brightness in true Christians. All his life long Jacobi was studying the Christian faith, and wishing that he could accept it as his own; but he had his doubts. "I am," said he, "a Christian at heart, but in intellect a heathen."

CHAPTER V.

HERDER.

HERDER, at the time when Lessing died, was only thirty-seven years old, but had already gained a place in literature, and especially had made himself remarkable as an enthusiastic student of poetry—especially the poetry of the Bible. This he described as the most appropriate form in which divine inspiration can be communicated to men. “Poetry, philosophy, and history,” he said, are the three lights that illuminate the nations. It will be noticed that, though he was by profession a theologian, he says nothing here of religion. For him religion was not a series of doctrines; but was the spirit, the vital breath, animating all culture, while the aim of all culture was—to use his own word—humanitarian. It may be justly observed that the words here used to denote Herder’s position are in meaning wide and vague; but these words are his own, and others, though more precise, might be incorrect. As regards doctrinal religion, Herder could not be numbered with the orthodox, nor could he find satisfaction in the cold unbelief of his age. Without a doubt, the human side of Christianity—the traits that the common people like and understand; the sentiments accordant with the heart’s best affections; and, not least, the poetry of religion—had been too long comparatively neglected in Lutheranism. Hence men of views differing widely in some important respects—especially as regards the moral character and the destiny of man—might in common readily accept a great part of Herder’s teaching which, briefly given, tells us that Christianity is true humanity. Obviously, a proposition in which both the

subject and the predicate are so large can of itself say little. It is but one of these euphonic abstractions so freely employed in Herder's time; and to find his own true meaning we must fairly study the records of his life, beginning with his youthful enthusiasm, and closing with the disappointment and melancholy of his later years.

Herder's general notion of revelation and religion is—like Lessing's—educational; but this again is a general idea, and leaves a larger question open respecting its practical meaning. As those who are to be educated are men, and in Christianity we find the true model of humanity, it follows that our principles of education must be Christian. Does Herder intend then to say only this—that Christian ethics are our bases of education? If so, he might have said it more clearly. Or does he mean more?—There are found in his writings passages that might lead one to answer "Yes;" for example the following:—

"Teachers of religion, true ministers of the word of God! what a work have you to do in an age like this! To perform it well, your first pre-requisite must be this—to believe that there is in Holy Scripture a revelation of God, and that there is also one in the history of mankind. And by one, as by the other, we are led to one centre—to Jesus Christ . . . If to teach morality is the chief business of the preacher, and if the Bible, and the words of Jesus, are to be viewed but as quotations, that come indeed from God, but only as all truth comes from Him—then farewell Christianity, religion, and revelation!"

It would not be right to quote any few sentences like the above as full and satisfactory expressions of Herder's religious tenets. He was a man whose thoughts are pervaded by a religious tone, while his belief is, for the most part, implied rather than expressed.

His literary services may, however, be clearly estimated, while some doubts are left still unsolved respecting the tendencies of his more strictly religious works. In the days when he was young, literary men—especially those who cared for poetry—belonged mostly to two schools—the

broad and the narrow. Nicolai, the critic and bookseller at Berlin, represents the latter; Herder the former. To the notions of Nicolai and some of his friends the collective name "literary rationalism" has been applied. The term is vague; but it indicates truly the fact, that the tendency called "rationalism," with regard to religion, was also closely connected with general literature, at the time when Herder first appeared as a critic, or rather as an enthusiastic lover of poetry.

As we have seen, there was nothing original in the earlier German rationalism. At first borrowed from Locke, Toland, Tindal, and other foreign authors, it travelled by way of France, and gained prestige at the court of Berlin. Other courts imitated Berlin, and from courts the "new light" spread among the middle classes. Berlin long remained the centre of "enlightenment," and its chief representative was Nicolai. It was to him that Lessing addressed the popular note already named:—"All the liberty you have at Berlin is to send to the market your stupid jokes against religion." "The literary rationalism" of the time prescribed narrow and dogmatic rules of criticism, and was generally negative and exclusive. Old German poetry, Shakespeare's dramas and Percy's "Reliques of Ancient English Poetry" were all alike condemned. Nicolai and his friends had some appreciation of wit and comic humour and could admire a satirical fable; but they maintained that poetry—like religion—must be judged by the newly-discovered criterion, "common sense;" everything that could not be understood as readily as "that $2+2=4$ " must be denounced as superstition; morals may be taught in verse, and poetry may do the work of catechisms; but all expressions of faith, feeling or thought, transcending Nicolai's own faculty of common sense must be condemned as dreamery or nonsense. Against all such rules as these, Herder was—next to Hamann—the arch-rebel of the period. He was the head-master of the broad school, and it is not too much to say that he gave a new inspiration to German poetry and philosophy. He did not

lay down precise rules; but he widened the boundaries of study and communicated to others his own enthusiasm.

JOHANN GOTTFRIED HERDER, the son of a poor schoolmaster, was born at Mohrungen, 25th August, 1744. After some time spent in the study of surgery, he went to Königsberg (1762) where he studied theology, heard Kant's lectures on philosophy, and became acquainted with Hamann, who was one of Kant's friends.

Of all the men whom the "men of light" called dreamers, mystics and hypocrites, Johann Georg Hamann was the chief. His errors, as contrasted with the light of the period, were dark as midnight. He still believed in a divine revelation, and appealed, for proof of his belief, to his own conscience and experience. He had been, as he confessed, a sinner in his youth, and, when reduced to moral desperation, had been saved, as he declared, by reading the Bible. He refused to sacrifice feelings or even old traditions to hard logic, cared little for either mental or moral philosophy, and thought it a mistake to put any intellectual theory in the place of faith. Lastly, he talked of poetry as a kind of revelation far above all reasonings. This bold dogma was accepted by Herder; but he by no means embraced the whole of the creed asserted by Hamann, who went as far toward the East as Nicolai went toward the West. In his earlier life, Hamann, while engaged as the agent of a commercial firm, had neglected his duties and involved himself in debt. His efforts to extricate himself seemed deficient in energy, and Kant, as a friend, wrote a mild letter of reproof. The reply was odd and characteristic. The friendly tone of Kant's letter was acknowledged, while the advice given by one who was "only a philosopher and a moralist" was repelled. "I am glad, however," said Hamann, "that my sins have led you thus to address me; for I entertain a hope that your correspondence with the sinner may end in your conversion to Christianity."

The notions derived by Herder from his intercourse with Hamann led to a new theory of poetry. The theory might

seem vague as a whole, but included such principles as these:—that poetic genius must not be confined by any laws made by a small critic like Nicolai; that imagination and feeling had their rights, not to be suppressed by the newly deified “reason” of the period; that religion and poetry were closely allied, and, lastly, that true inspiration might be found in the best of those unstudied productions which Herder called “the people’s songs of many lands.” On this last topic the difference existing between the broad and the narrow school was extreme. Herder devoted his studies to the popular German poetry of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and to Percy’s “Reliques of Ancient English Poetry,” and then went on to collect specimens of “the people’s songs” of all nations.

During the years 1764-69, Herder was engaged as a teacher and preacher at Riga and travelled for some time in France and Germany. In 1770 he went to Strassburg and became acquainted with Goethe, who was there concluding his studies in law. Of this early friendship of Herder and Goethe the latter has given us a pleasant account. Here we find the most teachable young poet of the day receiving instruction from one whose genius is receptive rather than creative. The teacher is a man with rounded features, dark eyes, and a mouth of pleasant expression when he smiles. He would be, on the whole, good-looking, but is suffering from a fistula in one of his eyes, for which he is expecting to undergo an operation. He wears a clerical dress, and too often speaks in the dictatorial tone of a schoolmaster. He has had a hard struggle with straitened circumstances and has been engaged as a schoolmaster and a preacher; but his favourite studies are poetry, literary history, and the history of culture. It is one of his characteristics that, in his earnestness, he assumes an oracular tone which he does not put aside though talking now to no ordinary student, but to young Goethe, one of the original geniuses of the age. What is there that the pupil has not studied? Besides Latin and Greek, he reads French, knows some-

thing of Hebrew, and has read books on pietism, mysticism, chemistry, alchemy and the fine arts. Not long ago, he injured his health by his efforts to master the art of etching on copper. His genius requires concentration, but Herder advises him to devote himself to the study of the popular poetry of all nations! "What we want," says Herder, "is a poetry in harmony with the voices of all the peoples and with the whole heart of mankind. Our studies must be cosmopolitan, and must include the popular poetry of the Hebrews, the Arabs, the mediæval Franks, Germans, Italians and Spaniards, and even the songs and ballads of half savage races. We must go back to the earliest times to educate ourselves, so that we may write poetry, not for a school, nor for a certain period, but for all men and for all time."—Such teaching is rather vague, though Goethe listens to it with deep interest; but when he asks for clear details he is not satisfied. Herder wishes to stimulate rather than to instruct his pupil. Several of Hamann's tracts, dingily printed on bad paper, are lying on the table; they have odd titles, such as "*Aesthetica in Nuce*" (1762), and the "*Socratic Memorabilia*" (1759). When Goethe has opened one of these tracts, and has tried to read it, he finds something that attracts attention, but he cannot understand it, and begs his friend to act as interpreter. Herder only laughs and says:—"you must read on, and you will come at last to the meaning."

There can be no doubt that Goethe was aided by Herder's lessons, however rhapsodical the style might be. In the course of a few years, the pupil had an opportunity of showing his respect for his teacher. Herder, after leaving Strassburg, was for some time engaged as a chaplain at Bückeburg, and then went to Göttingen, where he hoped to gain a professorship. He soon obtained a more favourable position (1776), when he was recommended by Goethe, and received from Karl August of Saxe-Weimar an appointment as chaplain to the court and superintendent of the church district of Weimar. During the years 1776-1803, when

Goethe and Herder were neighbours, their friendship gradually declined. The cause is partly ascribed to the latter's irritable temper. He could not well bear the presence of a superior, and he never laid aside entirely the schoolmaster's tone in which he used to give lectures on poetry to his young pupil at Strassburg. The publication of the "Xenien" widened the distance between the two authors, and other causes conspired to keep them apart. When Herder found, as he believed, a want of moral earnestness in Goethe's works, he regarded them with diminished admiration, while he could overlook all the faults of Jean Paul, with whose tendencies he sympathized.

Extensive studies, the clerical duties belonging to the offices of Superintendent and President of the Consistory, and endeavours for the promotion of education, supplied work for Herder during the later years of his life. His aims were noble; but his efforts were spread over a field of study too extensive to be well cultivated by one man. In contrast with such an ideal as he held in view, he might well regard his own life as a failure. His later years were clouded with melancholy, and, after all his extensive studies and contributions to literature, he often sighed, "Ah, my wasted life!" When lying on his death-bed, he said to his son:—"Suggest some great thought to stir my soul." These words were chosen as the motto of one of Jean Paul's ideal stories. Herder died in 1803. A tablet sacred to his memory had for an inscription the three words:—"Life, Light, Love." They have reference to a few words in a parable written by Herder on the creation of man:—"then Life animated the dust; Light beamed on the human face divine, and Love chose his heart for her still home."

Herder's writings in prose treat mostly of these subjects:—literary history and criticism, education, theology, and the philosophy of history. In the "Ideas for a Philosophy of the History of Mankind" (1784-91) he suggested the aims and gave the outlines of that comprehensive study. The work contains many important thoughts and some fine,

enthusiastic passages, written in a style that may be defined as half prose, half poetry. Like other writers—including Comte—who have treated of the same vast theme, Herder maintains that the first form in which philosophy, or a general theory of life, appeared, was religion; but he does not go on to talk of an extinction of religion as a necessary result of "evolution." On the contrary, he predicts that religion will be the final form to which philosophy will be reduced. One of the writer's aims is to induce from the theory of evolution an argument in favour of the soul's immortality.

Of the sermons written by Herder the few that have been published are plain and practical. The author here wins our respect by making literary decoration subordinate to his earnest desire to teach. His writings on Education deserve the same praise. In his school-lectures, collected under the title "*Sophron*," he points to a solution of our present educational problem, "the conflict of studies." The solution may be found, as the author suggests, when we care more for the educative quality than for the quantity of instruction. We may trace Herder's influence in some of the best of recent books on the science of education.

Herder's most important poetical work is "the Voices of the Peoples" (1778), a series of free translations of popular songs and ballads, including specimens culled from the North, the North-West and the South of Europe, with old German and Scandinavian songs, and some examples of poetry found among half-savage tribes. In this work the general tendency was one that served to awaken a cosmopolitan taste in imaginative literature. The tendency was developed by the brothers Schlegel and other scholars, and is still one of the chief intellectual characteristics of the German people.

Herder was the herald of that "world's literature" of which Goethe hailed the advent. "National literature," said he, "is of little importance; for the age of a world-

literature is at hand, and every one ought to work to accelerate the coming of this new era. Another contribution to the study of "the world's literature," is found in Herder's book on "the Spirit of Hebrew Poetry" (1782). It called the attention of readers to the remarkable fact—that, on account of its connection with theology, the sublime poetry of the Hebrew people had been less estimated as poetry than it might have been, if studied apart from any theory of inspiration. In the above-named, and in several other works, having the same general purpose, Herder suggested the idea of a new and genial treatment of literary history as closely united with the history of culture. This was, indeed, his great work. He gave to German culture its tendency towards universality.

To estimate the importance of such a work, with regard, not only to poetry but also to the interests of civilization, would be a task far exceeding our limits. It may, however, be noticed, that Herder's idea has greatly widened our notion of writing history. Tales of dull politics and battles will not now suffice as substitutes for a story of the world's life. Instead of pragmatic historians, we want men who will forget themselves, live in the spirit of the periods they attempt to describe, and then call back again to life the ages that have passed away. There is a moral interest in this new direction given to historical studies, for it may tend towards the promotion of peace. The most quarrelsome times and peoples have been such as have had the least true knowledge of, the least sympathy with, other ages and nations.

Herder's original poems are less important than the free versions of poetry already described. Among these "the Cid" (or the Champion), which makes the nearest approach to originality, is a cycle of ballads telling the adventures of the Spanish hero Roderigo Diaz. In his "myths" and "parables" Herder shows his love of allegory and his desire to unite poetry with ethical teaching. One of the

shortest—the Child of Mercy—may here be given, as a specimen of the style already described as a mixture of prose and poetry:—

When the Almighty would create man, He called together before His throne a council of the highest angels.

“Create him not!”—So spoke the Angel of Justice:—“he will be unjust towards men, his brethren; he will be hard and cruel in his treatment of those who are weaker than himself.”

“Create him not!” said the Angel of Peace:—“He will saturate the earth with human blood. The first-born of the race will slay his brother.”

“Thou mayst create him after thine own likeness, and stamp on his countenance the impress of truth; yet he will desecrate with falsehood even thine own Sanctuary.”—So said the Angel of Truth.

And they would have said more. But Mercy, the youngest and dearest child of the Eternal Father, stepped to the throne and kneeled before him.

“Create him!” she prayed:—“create him in thine own image, and as the favoured object of thy benevolence. When all others, thy ministers, forsake him, I will still be with him, will lovingly aid him, and make even his errors conduce to his amelioration. I will touch his heart with pity, and make him merciful to others weaker than himself. When he goes astray from the way of truth and peace, when he transgresses the laws of justice and equity, the results of his own errors shall lead him back to the right path, and forgiving love shall convert him.”

Then the Father of Men created Man. . . .

Remember thy origin, O Man! when thou art hard and unmerciful. Of all God’s attributes, it was Mercy that called thee into existence. And still, for life and all that life includes, thou art indebted to the love and pity that clasps the infant to the mother’s bosom.

The world will not hear of “potential great men”—men who “might have been great painters or great poets.” Yet one is tempted to think that Coleridge, if he had not been buried in metaphysics, might have written a finer poem than “Christabel.” And it seems probable that, if Herder’s studies had been less comprehensive, his genius might have been more creative. But, whatever his rank may be, when he is distinctly estimated as a critic, or as a

poet, or as a writer on the philosophy of history, it may be safely asserted, that in the general aim of all his life's work, he looked farther on and higher than all the poets and other literary men who were his neighbours at Weimar. For what was that aim?—Nothing less or lower than a union of practical life with the highest culture and with religion. The general purport of his writings on history, education, and religion cannot be given in a few precise words, but serves to suggest such questions as these:—"What is the use of an education that does not grasp the whole man? What is the worth of our civilization without a higher culture founded on religion? And what is the worth of religion, if it has not power to subdue this real world around us; power to permeate and transmute into a nobler form our common, practical, every day existence."

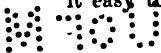
What was Lessing's one guiding thought, to which we have referred (p. 70) though postponing its analysis?—The answer must still be deferred; but it may be observed here, that Herder, in his best thoughts on religion, comes near to a solution of the question. The souls of other men have been stirred by the same thoughts respecting the ultimate aims of educational religion; yet they especially belong to Herder. His general influence was favourable to the restoration of Christian belief, and his services—since his time too slightly estimated by certain critics—are remarkable, when we consider the character of the times in which he lived. He was well acquainted with Spalding, already named as one among the earliest and most respectable of the rationalists. Herder was Kant's pupil at a time when the "Kritik" was unknown; he lived to see its doctrine widely accepted, and then, with a characteristic courage, he wrote against it. Meanwhile he had done a great part of the work afterwards too largely ascribed to Kant's criticism. As to the general tendency of their work, Kant and Herder were alike in this—under the name of "humanity," they introduced ethical teaching far higher than the doctrine of utility, held by Spalding and other

respectable men of his class ; and this new ethical teaching was in fact borrowed from Christianity.

These remarks may serve to suggest an answer to a question that here might naturally arise—Why should Herder be noticed next to Lessing? Kant was twenty years older than Herder. The answer to the question is twofold. Lessing, as we have seen, had suggested this idea : that ethical Christianity—rightly accepted as a revelation of God's will and reason—may, in the last result of its own evolution, reduce itself to a clear, self-evident law for all men ; a law written in the heart. The result so anticipated has its systematic exposition in Kant's ethical books, published in the course of the time 1787-93 ; and these, therefore, might claim notice next to the account given of Lessing. But Kant was a systematic philosopher, and it is obviously desirable that systems of philosophy—especially those of Kant, Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel—should be noticed in such an order as may show their true sequence. Moreover, we have to study the relations of culture with Christianity ; and philosophy—strictly so called—is only one part of culture. Now in the years following Lessing's decease, when Semler, Spalding, Klopstock, Kant, and Mendelssohn were numbered with the old men of their period, Herder was writing on Hebrew poetry and on the philosophy of history ; and he was still writing on poetry and philosophy in 1799-1803, when of all those old friends only one was surviving. This was Spalding, the rationalist, who was almost ninety years old when Herder died, Dec. 1803. In the course of the years 1781-1803 a rapid transition was made, not alone in the tone in which religious questions were discussed, but also and almost contemporaneously in general culture, especially in poetical literature ; and if—next to Lessing—any one man is to be named as the chief prophet of a higher culture, this man is Herder. It may be said that his work is in some respects not easily defined ; but it is clear that his influence was great.

To show the truth of this observation, nothing more is required than a brief survey of the times in which he lived. Their most salient trait—the rapid spread of unbelief—has been generally noticed; but here our radius of observation may be extended, especially with reference to the academic life of Herder's time, including chiefly thirty-six years of his literary career. The intellectual power wielded by the universities in this time was, to a large extent, employed in opposition to all that is vital in religion. Biblical criticism and philosophy—so-called—went on together hand in hand in their work of destruction. Natural religion, of which so much had been said, was so meanly represented as a doctrine of utility and worldly prudence, that its teachings could not be called religious in any distinct sense. They were lower than some early forms of paganism. Of the dim yet true instinct with which religion begins—the wish to know something of the whole, or rather of the will governing the whole, to which we belong; that seeking after God named by St. Paul; the instinct, at once divine and human, leading us on toward thinking and believing in concert with others; the wish to find our higher life and consciousness continued, expanded; to hear our own prayers re-echoed in the prayers of other souls—of all this incipient religious thought hardly a word is said in the sermons of the advanced thinkers of the time 1750-1800—the dry though popular preachers among the rationalists, who might have found in “Poor Richard's Almanac” texts quite good enough for their sermons. This allusion should not be understood as one implying the notion that Benjamin Franklin could not rise above the level of such utilitarian deists as in his own day were preaching of the wisdom of this world in Prussia and the neighbourhood. To several among them indeed might have been addressed some remarks found in one of his letters:—

“Were you to succeed [in your anti-Christian reasonings] do you imagine any good would be done by it? You [yourselves] may find it easy to live a virtuous life, without the assistance afforded by



religion; you having a clear perception of the advantages of virtue, and the disadvantages of vice, and possessing a strength of resolution sufficient to enable you to resist common temptations. But think how great a portion of mankind consists of weak and ignorant men and women, and of inexperienced, inconsiderate youth of both sexes, who have need of the motives of religion to restrain them from vice, to support their virtue, and retain them in the practice of it till it becomes habitual, which is the great point for its security. And perhaps you are indebted to Her originally—that is, to your religious education, for the habits of virtue upon which you now justly value yourselves. You might easily display your excellent talents of reasoning upon a less hazardous subject. . . . For among us it is not necessary—as among the Hottentots—that a youth to be raised into the company of men, should prove his manhood by beating his mother.”

Franklin’s last hint, given in this passage, was one much required by the deists of his time, whose ethics, when good for anything, were mostly borrowed from the faith they despised. Its motives they could not borrow, and consequently their moral maxims were but fingers of a hand cut off from all connection with the heart. He must know little of mankind who does not see, that motives are more wanted than maxims. Religion is emphatically truth urgently required by “all men,” and neglect of this fact is the greatest error of our modern treatises on religious philosophy. In Herder’s time—that is during the active years of his life—the error had assumed in Germany a peculiar form. There was a history of religion, discussed in the universities, and for the common people there was a morality that—it was supposed—represented the whole substance of Christianity, and would be made clearer and more practical when separated at once from the history and the doctrine of religion. For a time, the two subjects—practical morality and historical religion—thus divided, seemed mutually independent, and Semler’s notion—that Christian history and doctrine might be reduced to a minimum, or be altogether exploded, without doing much harm to morals—seemed to have something to say in its own behalf. Meanwhile the light—so called—was spread forth from the universities;

the ancient sanctions of private and social morality were destroyed; the results of unbelief were made apparent, first and most glaringly in Berlin and its neighbourhood, and later in and around nearly all the universities of North Germany. At the same time opposition was excited. The victory seemed won on the rationalistic side; and yet a conflict followed, of which the story mostly remains to be told. First may be noticed more distinctly the rapid progress of negation made in several of the universities during Herder's time.

The spread of the new teaching—especially in the time 1770-1800—may be made readily apparent by means of a shaded map of Prussia and its neighbouring states. Let depth of shade serve to distinguish the districts where enlightenment least prevailed. Then the central point of light will be Berlin, and the radiance will be seen spreading forth over Halle and Frankfurt-on-the-Oder; less brightly over Hanover, Leipzig, and Wittenberg; and leaving in comparative darkness the regions lying further off on the south and the south-east of Prussia.

From Halle—once the home of pietism—unbelief was very widely spread. Tübingen—in our own times made so prominent by its school of biblical criticism—remained firmly orthodox throughout the years of innovation. Here Lilienthal studied theology; later he was appointed professor at Königsberg—another home of orthodox teaching—where Herder attended his lectures. At Göttingen the eminent orientalist, J. D. Michaelis, though classed with men of the old school, was regarded by intelligent critics as a friend more dangerous than a foe. They complained that, in his expositions of the scriptures, he treated their contents as coldly as an accountant treats figures, when posting accounts in which he has no personal interest. But Göttingen retained on the whole a fair character as to belief until 1788, when Eichorn began to lecture here, and clearly displayed the unbelief that—as many suspected—had been masked by the learning of his

teacher, J. D. Michaelis. Next to Göttingen, the universities of Helmstädt, Erlangen, and Jena should be named, as centres of neological teaching, though at Jena, as at Göttingen, there remained until the close of the century several quiet men who, while refusing to advance in the way of innovation, mostly avoided everything that could lead to controversy. They understood well the only terms on which men of their class might, in their day, be allowed to live in peace. At Helmstädt the work initiated by Semler was vigorously prosecuted by Teller and Henke—the latter remarkable as a true follower of Semler, especially in the treatment of ecclesiastical history. At Erlangen one man of the old school, Seiler, remained like Abdiel, faithful, from 1770 until 1807. He had to encounter—it was said—some considerable persecution or reprobation, while neology was more and more boldly spread there by other professors, including such men as Rosenmüller, Bertholdt, and Ammon. At Rostock the progress of innovation was comparatively slow until the last decennium of the century. Kiel also remained apparently orthodox for a considerable time; but the tranquillity ruling here was more apparent than real. Of the three Hessian universities—Marburg, Kinteln, and Giessen—the last-named was the first in accepting the principles of neology, here boldly asserted by several professors in the course of the years 1770-90; afterwards maintained with greater resources of learning by Schmidt, author of a History of the Church.

Of Heidelberg little can be told; for in Herder's time it was not exclusively Protestant. After 1806, when the Catholic faculty was removed to Freiburg, theology at Heidelberg was mostly represented by rationalists—among them Paulus—but here also Daub and Marheinecke began their philosophical defence of Christianity, and some restoration of belief took place. This, however, did not belong to Herder's time. Shortly before the close of the century, when he looked around him, he saw rationalism almost everywhere victorious.

Movements of thought that seem highly important to professors and students in universities, are sometimes such as are hardly known or felt in the great world of practical life. This was the case in England, about the time 1835-40, though the questions then earnestly discussed in Oxford have in later years led to profound divisions of public opinion. But in North Germany—1770-1800—there occurred contemporaneously great changes in academic teaching and in public opinion. The new teaching—that religion would lose nothing valuable when reduced to a code of morals, and made easy in practice as well as in theory—was simultaneously made clear by professors, recommended by popular preachers, and made still more popular by the series of publications issued by Nicolai and other writers of his school.

Such were the intellectual circumstances of the times when Herder produced his more remarkable writings—especially his “*Ideas on the Philosophy of History*.” Speaking without special reference to any Christian doctrines, it might then be truly said, that—as regards the faith of the educated classes—religion itself was almost extinct in many districts of North Germany. Herder, in one of his sermons, confirms the truth of this description. But he was by nature an enthusiast—one of those men who must have a religion of some kind—and, left in these circumstances, he accordingly made a religion for himself. Of this the leading idea was a universal culture of humanity. It was an enlargement of Lessing’s idea respecting the religion of the future; for that was apparently an idea of education chiefly ethical. Herder’s idea includes with a philosophical study of history such a devotion to all true culture and progress as can be inspired only by an enthusiastic hope of the future. For the ethical character of Christianity, Herder, no doubt, entertained at all times a sincere respect; but his enthusiasm reminds us chiefly of Rousseau, whose writings he had diligently studied. And more and more in the course of Herder’s later years, his

new idea of evolution seemed to take the place of religion. In the expansion of this one idea he anticipated the general notion of Darwin's theory, and suggested studies that since his day have been zealously prosecuted; especially historical and philosophical studies respecting the languages, literatures, and religions of various nations. It is true, that as his own thoughts of such studies were initiative, so his forms of expression were often vague, or more poetic than scientific; yet they served well to disturb certain fixed and arbitrary notions remaining in his day. For example, when some old tradition or custom of any people had been labelled "superstition," it was at once cast aside, as a matter not worth further inquiry; and so fetichism was at once dismissed, when it had been defined as a "worship of stocks and stones." But such inquiry as was suggested by Herder has led to the discovery that religions widely different still retain such traits of likeness as may suggest, though dimly, the general character of their common original. This is but one of many results to which Herder's ideas have led.

The vast expanse of his studies may be indicated by naming the subjects of a few among their divisions. One has to show that religion is true humanity; another makes it clear that the most refined pleasures are the most enduring; a third asserts that our clearest and best knowledge is the result of intuition; and in a fourth we learn, how, in the gradual creation of the earth, there may be observed a continuous ascending series of forms and energies. Yet all these and other subjects of inquiry, as viewed by Herder, belonged to one plan of culture, and all are inspired by an enthusiasm such as might attend the proclamation of a new religion. Was this ideal of culture intended by the author to expand, or to supersede such Christianity as remained extant in his time?—In his writings the question is nowhere thus distinctly put; accordingly no precise answer will be found there. Yet an answer approximately true may be suggested.

In Herder's view, the educational religion that is to prevail in the future is a universal culture of humanity—a culture of every higher faculty belonging distinctly to man. Knowledge of the highest kind must—as Herder believed—ever be associated with reverence. It may therefore be expected that as men learn more and more of the universe to which they belong, and of the true evolution of their own nature, they will also become more and more liberated from self-love, more reverent, dutiful, and devoted to the whole life or general welfare of humanity. And as knowledge will lead to religion, so devotion and obedience—with submission to every individual sacrifice demanded by the general design of Providence—will lead us on to clearer insight and to higher hope respecting the future, which belongs to us, because we belong to humanity. It has, no doubt, been observed, that nothing is said here of sin—nothing of the main question to which a true religion must give a true answer.

This summary or bird's-eye view of Herder's philosophy makes it evident that its predominant idea is optimistic and distinctly Pelagian. It remains true that the general tone of his enthusiasm was favourable to the restoration of belief; but his philosophy could supply no direct aid or evidence in favour of Christianity. Where the main question to which religion should give an answer is thus suppressed, there can be excited no such inquiry as might lead to the truth. On one occasion, at least, Herder wrote to the effect, that religion itself must be perpetuated and expanded, though it does not follow that it should always be called the Christian religion. It is remarkable how often this same thought has in substance been expressed by eminent writers—Jacobi, Goethe, and Fichte, but especially by Strauss. The idea on which it is founded is really nothing more than the truism that "nature does not expend all her resources in the production of a single type."

The remark is nothing more than the bare suggestion of an argument which might be based upon natural and historical

analogies. The wealth and beauty of vegetation are not finally displayed in any one flower, or tree, or in any one forest. So in human history, no hero is so great that he does not leave room for a succession of heroes in later time. And so even in the sphere of ethics; though we speak of eternal bases of morals, yet one moral teacher, or one school of morals, must make room for another. All this is true, and moreover trite. It can serve however as the basis of an argument against the finality of the Christian religion; but only so long as this religion is regarded merely as one—though the best—of moral systems; or so long as its Author is viewed only as one—though the highest—of ethical teachers. And that this, at one time, was in substance Herder's own view of his own religion, we are assured—though not everywhere with perfect clearness—by several passages in his writings. In his lines "Am stillen Freitag" (on Good Friday) he must have said more, if he had felt and believed more. The return of that day reminds him how a life of supreme beneficence, holy obedience, and profound suffering, was closed in perfect resignation and patience; and the poet prays that his own life and death may—in due lowliness—be imitative of that example. He says no more.

Turning again to Herder's prose writings—it is well known that he is no systematic or doctrinal writer. He speaks as one endowed with intuition, and sees the truth—so far as he sees it—as if by a kind of divination. Yet there are passages where he speaks clearly enough respecting the limitations of his belief. The following may serve as examples:—

"Christianity, originally founded on self-denial, remains firmly based on the same ground, and is invincible in the midst of persecution and contempt." "To Him now enthroned it is an indifferent question: Shall His name be repeated in endless litanies, or [be forgotten]?" . . . "Though His name be left in silence, everyone who knows how to distinguish between dross and gold, will by silent imitation of His example, still revere, in his own prescribed way, the Hero of philanthropy, the stillest of all benefactors of his race. As to the name 'Christian'—let it remain, or let it pass—that can matter little. Furi-

fied from all dross, *His* religion will remain as the religion of humanity." . . . "To give and where no other act can be found: to compassionate mankind, wherever lying prostrate, afflicted with maladies earthly or spiritual—this is Christianity. Its germs, scattered here and there in good actions unobserved—here lying under the snow, or there springing up among thorns—will surely bring forth fruit that will at last be recognized by Christ, and will be gathered in with His harvest. It is Christian beneficence that hitherto has upheld the [civilized] world, and it will not pass away. The future of humanity will consist in [the evolution of] what still remains with us of genuine and real Christianity. This alone can perpetuate itself and live on for ever—the true religion of humanity."

It might be suggested in this place that the writer's views, expressed in these sentences, are to some extent self-contradictory; but our sole aim here is to quote a few passages characteristic of Herder's general belief. There might be borrowed from his sermons sentences in which he expresses with deep feeling a sense of the difficulty of his position as a Christian pastor. In one, for example, he addresses serious words of admonition to himself, and next calls to mind some examples of fidelity afforded by his predecessors, of whom the chief is especially named; then follow these remarkable words:—

"But why do I not rather mention the Lord of lords, the King of kings, the Holy One, and Protector of all human souls,—Jesus Christ . . . *why* do I not mention Him, as He stands here, where more than 'two or three are gathered together' in His name, and call on Him?—He stands here in our midst, pointing to His own word and His own congregation, and saying:—'I have bought and gained these with my blood. Take care of these, and all over whom thou hast been placed as shepherd and guardian, that none of these may be lost whom I commit to thee—none of these who are like stars in my hand, and whose names are written in my heart and on my breast.'"

The passage is quoted, not as a fair example of Herder's tone, either in preaching or in writing; on the contrary as one exceptional, but especially as one containing a remarkable question—"Why do I not mention Him?"—a question strongly characteristic of the time when, and the place—Weimar—where the sermon was delivered. It is impossible, in reading these words, to forget the prediction: that in

certain times and places, there would be felt a temptation of a peculiar nature—a sense of shame, or fear, attending every attempt toward making a Christian confession.

A consideration of the two passages quoted and placed in contrast, will indicate the nature of the change that led to Herder's later religious teaching. This has been described as mostly humanitarian; but one word cannot tell all that ought to be told, to show the true character and the importance of Herder's position as regards the union of Christianity and culture. He was not a clear writer; he mingled too often the free style and phraseology of poetry with the strict method and careful use of language required by scientific and didactic writing; he but partly unveiled some speculative views that, since his time, have been clearly displayed. All these items of adverse criticism, and many others like them, are true; yet they do not lessen the interest and importance of Herder's intermediate position as representative, partly of the age immediately preceding his own, and partly of that which followed.

That he retained traits of the earlier time is true. This humanitarian teaching might be vaguely described as a continuation and expansion of the utilitarian teaching found in the pages of such writers as Jerusalem, Spalding, and Zolliköfer; but Herder belonged not wholly to their school—a school including the most respectable of all the Lutheran pastors who were classed with the rationalists. Herder retained, with the ethics of the Christian religion, all the enthusiasm and glow of life that can remain united with its teaching, when its central tenet has been rejected. When he spoke, in terms that might be called Utopian, respecting the prospects of "humanity"—his favourite word—he was speaking of the highest results that in some far distant day may be visible, when ethical Christianity shall be united with a universal culture of mankind's highest faculties. Later writers, who have talked of scientific and æsthetic culture, as likely to supply a substitute for religion—at least among men of high education—have not advanced a step beyond

Herder's position; on the contrary they have made a retrograde movement, just so far as they have denied what he wished to maintain. In his picture of future humanity, the earth is to be vastly enriched and beautifully adorned with all the products of man's genius, skill, and industry; but the warmth and light that will then invigorate and cheer humanity is still to descend from heaven. In a word, he never dreams of separating earth from heaven—human life from religion—but of uniting them more and more closely. Extended culture—he assures us—will lead to expanded views of religious duty, while the peace and welfare insured by practical religion will of course be favourable to the progress of culture; and the general result of the whole process will be the realization of a new world where of all that will be seen it will be truly said: *πάντα θεία καὶ ἀνθρώπινα πάντα*.

On what basis rests the hope so widely expanded?—He partly answers the question in the chief writings of his later years—1784-91—where to some extent he expands the idea of evolution, as the means by which our present world has arisen out of the past. "From the stone to the crystal"—he writes—"from the crystal to the metal; from the metal on to various forms of vegetation, and hence on to diversified forms of animal life—we see everywhere developed manifold forms of organization displaying themselves in an ascending series." . . . "Throughout the whole series there prevails a general likeness to one fundamental type, which—however varied in the forms of its evolution—makes approaches nearer and nearer to the human form; and as likeness to this form more and more prevails, so in due proportion we observe that a nearer and still nearer approach is made to the display of such rational faculties as belong to man." . . . "The ultimate design, we see at last, is the development of the rational faculties, the freedom, and the humanity of mankind." The use of the word "humanity" in this place is not tautological, as it might at first appear; but is explained when the writer goes on to assert—that his theory of evolution leads him finally to a belief in the

immortality of the soul. "No force is ever lost," he says, "however forms may change and disappear." He thus goes on—speaking apparently of the immortality of the individual soul—

"And shall that force be lost which we are compelled to regard as the purest, the most active of all the forces of which we have any knowledge? Shall the power be annihilated that overcomes and makes subordinate to itself the forces deployed in lower forms of organization—the power that can behold and even overrule itself—that can know, love, imitate God?"

A critic possessing even Lessing's analytic skill, would find some difficulty in the task of giving a clear summary of Herder's religious views. In many instances, one of his passages might be set in contrast against another. In his ethical principles he remains Christian. His writings represent no system, but a world of thoughts, sentiments, and beliefs, where—as regards authority—there is no centre. It has already been observed that his doctrine respecting mediation is Pelagian, though apparent exceptions to the rule may be found in his earlier writings. Taking his writings as a whole—their doctrine, or series of doctrines, their moral tone, their general tendency toward a union of high culture with practical religion—they especially deserve notice; they are at once characteristic of the time when he lived, and representative of tendencies that have been developed in our own age.

Few now read Herder's discursive writings, but it is clear that they have been extensively read, for almost the whole of the teaching contained in them has been repeated in clearer forms of expression. Setting aside books that may be called abstruse—our lighter essays and reviews, of which the chief characteristic is a union of religion with some freedom of speculation, are to a large extent reproductions of Herder's own ideas, or of thoughts that have been suggested by his writings. There was prevalent in his day, though only among men of extreme opinions, a notion that the Christian religion, and all that belongs to it, might be

suddenly abolished, so that the civilized world, as regards the very bases of society, might begin *denovo* with institutions founded on reason alone. The idea of that violent and destructive rationalism then belonged more to France than to Germany, and now is everywhere exploded among thoughtful men, however strong may be their love of innovation and progress—however much they may be inclined toward treating men as now sufficiently educated by centuries of submission to Christian teaching, and as well able to guide themselves by the light of experience and reason. There is now very widely spread in Germany, in France, and in England, a new rationalism, in theory as in general character more moderate and more plausible than the revolutionary doctrine spread so rapidly in Europe about a century ago. For the sake of brevity, it might perhaps be pardoned, if this new rationalism was called a faith in evolution—a faith of which the nucleus is found in Herder's later writings; especially in his ideas on the philosophy of history.

His later ideas of ethics—if the word may include all that is intended by his own word “humanity”—are clearer than his religious teaching, which seems perplexing, when his earlier and his later writings are compared together. The later may be so interpreted as to lead to the conclusion that human nature—considered in itself, or viewed apart from every thought of supernatural mediation—is *per se* in concord with all that is recognized as divine. Accordingly, all the liberation that can be required by humanity is attainable by means of its own evolution, and moral evil may be viewed as a temporary limitation. This is suggested as an interpretation of Herder's later doctrine, and as one that in some degree is justified, partly by the writer's silence respecting well-known objections to his theory; and especially by his observations on Kant's clear teaching respecting the “radical evil” which—as he asserts—is inherent in our human nature. This teaching Herder in his later writings rejects; he even describes it as “something fantastic.” On the other hand, the admission that man is conscious

of sinfulness, and requires liberation, is regarded still by multitudes—including philosophers as well as theologians—as a first postulate, a *sine quâ non*, without which there can be no true idea of the Christian religion. Its first appeal to the heart assumes the facts as granted: that man finds himself bound by the power of evil inherent in himself; that he requires liberation, and would liberate himself—but cannot.

It is agreed by his biographers that Herder in his later years was less and less enthusiastic, and some writers have spoken—perhaps rather too boldly—respecting a general change of a negative character observed in the expression of his religious sentiments. With too little caution—forgetting for a moment the danger of hasty judgment—they have also noticed the coincidence that Herder, near the close of his life, was afflicted with a melancholy that was more than a passing cloud. This was partly constitutional. It may be observed here that the circumstances attending his position at Weimar, though apparently enviable in some secular respects, were not altogether favourable to religious culture. He was a man for whom imaginative literature, though classical, was not a good substitute for faith.

In the closing hours of his life there was observed in him a brief revival of the enthusiasm that had once inspired his studies, and he expressed the wish that his soul and mind might be once more pervaded by the presence of some sublime idea. “I feel,” said he, “that then I might recover.”

CHAPTER VI.

JACOBI AND HIS FRIENDS.

THAT a tendency toward some restoration of belief was here and there shown in Herder's time is true; and it is made more apparent when we come to notice the farther extended life—especially the later years—of his friend Jacobi, who died in 1819. He was a man whose position, as regards the old contest of faith and reason, has sometimes been described in paradoxical terms. It has been said he was a philosopher without a plan of philosophy, and a Christian without faith in Christianity.

The facts so boldly exaggerated are these: he was a sincere and earnest inquirer—sometimes bewildered and almost confounded by the contradictions of his time—but so far as he had any faith, it was Christian in its tendency. His time of active life—say 1770-1812—was an age pre-eminent for its confusion in the world of opinions. Semler—who died in 1791—might, if his life had been spared somewhat longer, have felt himself at home; for then might have been quoted—more appropriately than in his notices of the Early Church—his favourite observation—"nothing is so remarkable as this endless diversity of opinions." It was in Germany, as well as in France, an age of revolution. Six or seven schools of philosophy in Germany then rivalled, in their speed of succession, about as many schools of political opinion in France.

In such a time Jacobi could find nothing firm but faith—a faith that in its general tendency was Christian, while as regards its strict limitation, it must be called his own. The literary men of his age—noticed here only as regards their

religious belief, and omitting all details of their differences—might be divided into two classes:—the negative men, and those well disposed towards the Christian faith. First and most prominent among the negative men were the rationalistic professors, preachers, and journalists, whose work has been described. Their reasonings were mostly clear, and their positive results—utilitarian morals—were such as might be readily understood. Another of their advantages was this—it so happened that their forces were comparatively centralized and well placed in battle array. On the other side, there were not a few men endowed with deep thought, and some possessing genius, who respected religion; but they were rather widely scattered here and there, and were associated only by a common sympathy.

At Berlin, Nicolai, as an able editor, led on a compact band of freethinkers, whose work had been greatly aided by the bad influence of the Court there—to say nothing of the mischief spread by the minor, imitative courts, where petty princes and their favourites studied French philosophy and read Wieland's loose fictions. Goethe, in his memoirs of early years, tells much of the time, and especially indicates its generally irreverent character. He describes himself as listening, at one time, to the ribaldry of Basedow; then as half converted by the pietistic appeals of Lavater; then as calling to talk with Jacobi, and listening long past midnight to the strains of his mystic philosophy. When the later religious views of Goethe are noticed, it should not be forgotten that, in the course of his youthful years, he was hardly acquainted intimately with any one person who could be described as a sober and intelligent Christian.

To say nothing of orthodoxy, men called religious were comparatively rare among those who had gained names in literature. Klopstock was living at Hamburg; Hamann at Königsberg; Herder at Weimar; Claudius at Wandsbeck (in Holstein); Leopold von Stolberg at Windeby (in Schleswig); and Lavater—when he was not wandering

about to convert others, or to find confirmation of his own faith—was mostly living at Zürich. All these men were numbered with the intimate friends of Jacobi. No student can have any true knowledge of the change respecting religious ideas that took place in Germany, in 1770-1800, if he fail to make himself acquainted with the circle of Jacobi and his friends. Their special opinions were heterogeneous; yet they were all agreed in one conviction—that rationalism, however clear, and to many acceptable, as reducing religion to a minimum, could not give rest to the soul. It was at best, they said, only the result of an understanding closely limited. Against it they urged the fact that multitudes in all ages had found rest in the deeper faith now contemned by men calling themselves enlightened. For this fact, they said, we are not able to give a reason such as our opponents will accept, and therefore we are content to say that the fundamental principle on which we rest is faith. This in general terms was the common confession of Jacobi's more believing friends; but his own confession was more closely limited. On the ground of faith he asserted the authority of pure Christian ethics, while he regarded Christianity on the whole with cordial admiration and—one might almost say—with reverent love. Yet he would not or could not call himself a Christian.

In the days when Goethe, Herder, and Jacobi might still be called young men, literature—in our day an arena of competition—was a delightful field of recreation; and friendly co-operation was in several instances more noticeable than rivalry. Indeed the friendships of literary men, though sometimes rather shallow, might be classed with the more pleasing traits of the period. The men who still had a common friendly feeling toward “the old religion”—so Christianity was sometimes described—were, as we have seen, rather widely scattered in their several localities, and accordingly were glad to find centres where they might now and then meet together. Of all their meeting-places Pempelfort near Düsseldorf—for some years Jacobi's

residence—was one of the pleasantest; especially for men who liked philosophical discussion. Here Hamann would sit as a patient listener, while Jacobi would describe some difficulty of escape out of the logic of Spinoza. Still the faith of the former would remain imperturbable, and he would speak in reply of the *λόγοι θεῖοι* against which no logic can prevail, while Jacobi would envy the repose of faith enjoyed by his mystic friend. “Deep thought makes one tolerant,” said Jacobi on one occasion, and the saying tells not a little of his character. He was in the firmer part of his belief—which, as he thought, was the whole—a theist of the highest class, and a believer in an immediate divine revelation of truth, as taking place in the soul of every true inquirer, and as independent of all such aid as the Christian faith, or any other positive religion, can supply. This was his own religious position; yet the friends with whom he best loved to converse were such men as in their time were called men of blind faith, or enthusiasts, or even fanatics—Hamann, Claudius, and Lavater—and their faith was regarded by him as a position stronger and safer than his own. This makes his character remarkable and interesting. Though sometimes, when vexed by controversy, he was led too far into a declamatory way of writing, he was on the whole a calm and dispassionate inquirer. Few men have, throughout a long life, preserved such noble purity of intention as was seen in Jacobi.

FRIEDRICH HEINRICH JACOBI, born in 1743, was the son of a rather wealthy merchant living at Düsseldorf, and in his youth received a mercantile education, in order that he might there carry on his father’s lucrative business. In this however he found no pleasure; and he soon retired from it, to devote himself to a studious life. Strange to say in his time—above all, in a position like his own—he cared more for the soul than the body; more for the world unseen and mostly called the future, than for the world seen in a physical sense, and called real and present. If

this disposition had been made manifest in the youth of a man called, in later life, to assume an official religious position, his reasonings—so far as favourable to religion—would in Jacobi's time have been called hypocritical. In his case, the charge was impossible. There is a peculiar interest in the study of his spiritual experience—thus may be described his so-called philosophy—for everything here is at least an item in an honest confession. His writings give us at least the true thoughts of one earnest, inquiring man respecting religion. Possibly, all that he said in favour of Christianity may as regards quantity be called little, but its quality is genuine.

After 1776, when his income was increased by his marriage, he retired from business, to his estate and country-house at Pempelfort; and here his chief delights were to surround himself with congenial friends—mostly literary men—and to devote his leisure to philosophical studies, especially those relating to religious questions. Spinozism was for Jacobi something like a dreaded spectre, that haunted him when employed in his own speculations; and he perhaps sometimes suspected its existence, where it did not exist. This was the case in the account he gave of Lessing's later views. Yet there might be something of foreboding in Jacobi's fear of Spinoza. Since his day it is remarkable how many thoughtful men—having rejected Christ's own revelation—have been led into theories more or less like Spinozism. The quiet time spent by Jacobi at Pempelfort was disturbed by fears of a French invasion; and in 1794 he went to live in Holstein, where again he found a circle of congenial friends, including Claudius, and the brothers Stolberg. In 1804 Jacobi was elected President of the New Academy at Munich, where he died in 1819.

Jacobi's works, as published in 1812-24, fill six octavo volumes, and yet it may be said, he never wrote a book. His want of method is almost as remarkable as his sincerity; but his insight is often clear, as may be seen in his

polemical writings; especially those relating to certain errors in the systems of Kant and Fichte.

Jacobi contends strongly that man requires the aid of a divine revelation; and he admits fully that the teaching of Christ is divine. Yet he refuses to accept it as the one revelation of divine truth required by mankind. At the same time he confesses that he finds no repose in his own philosophy. In his boyhood he began to inquire earnestly respecting the immortality and destination of his soul. All through life he was still asking for a sure reply to his questionings. Without violent paradox it might be said of him, that he was a believing sceptic, or a sceptical believer. Near the close of his life, he was accidentally overheard when expressing his thanks for the mercy—that he was still enabled and permitted to pray, and to find in grace his sole defence and ultimate hope. He was to the last a praying philosopher.

The correspondence of Jacobi and his friends has preserved too many letters of ephemeral interest, but tells much of the deeper and more religious tendencies felt in his time. Among genial and sympathetic men there prevailed in many instances a sadness something like the melancholy of Lessing and Herder—a sense of drear vacuity, not often expressed as strongly as it was by one of their contemporaries—Schubart, who wrote an autobiography. “Spalding, Semler, and Teller”—he says—“these were the men we had for our guides, in our inquiring, youthful days; and they destroyed our faith, hope, and love; they robbed us of our consolation in life, in suffering, in dying; and they have left us here desolate as we are. Oh, that the Christian religion were true!—But, alas! it is not, they tell me.—And *what* then is true?—I am plunged in deep melancholy.” These words expressed feelings shared by many; and Jacobi was one of the number. To say nothing of any one creed—there was felt a common want of sober and practical religion.

The friend to whom Jacobi chiefly looked up for religious

aid and guidance was Hamann, whose original character has been already partly noticed in the account given of Herder. There the influence of Hamann's teaching respecting the culture of poetry has been described as animating and suggestive, though by no means clear; here something to the same general effect must be said of his religious teaching. He was evidently one of those men whose personal influence was something more than can be made clear by a perusal of their writings. The same might be said of such men as Lavater and Jung-Stilling—as Herder and Goethe have noticed, especially respecting the former. Where personal faith and enthusiasm are remarkably manifested in a man's own life and character, it is difficult to transmit an adequate idea of his influence, even when he is one of those exceptional men who have the power of literary self-interpretation; and it is of course more difficult when this power is deficient. It was so far deficient in Hamann, that the extent of his influence in his own age is a fact to be asserted, but not to be described.

JOHANN GEORGE HAMANN was born in 1730 at Königsberg. His life—excepting two or three years near the close—was a series of adversities. At one time, when his own practical errors had brought him into circumstances of extreme misery, his mental suffering was intense. This crisis—as we are told in his autobiography—was followed by an almost sudden sense of deliverance, which he always afterwards ascribed to a supernatural source. On this fact in his own experience was founded his faith, which was asserted with great firmness, and in opposition to all the unbelief of his time. He was thus led to a contempt of all philosophy—indeed to a defiance of all reasonings, so far as they came into collision with his faith. It is hardly too much to say that Hamann hated logic and philosophy, though it is clear that he knew something about them. His reading had been too discursive; his course of studies—if such terms can be allowed in his case—had been “a maze,” and “without a plan.” His writings—to use the words of his

own confession—were so chaotic that he himself could not always understand them. And yet there is a general meaning in them. Religion, he tells us, is our deliverance from our sense of guilt—from our consciousness of opposition to God—and where the whole character and aim of religion are at the outset misunderstood—where it is first of all assumed that Christian faith is to be forced upon us by dint of mathematical evidence—there the end of all our logical inquiries will be an increase of controversy and confusion. Religion neither begins nor ends in the head. For the cold logician no texts will be convincing; proofs will lead only to further doubts. For me—a sinner seeking deliverance—“almost any texts of Holy Scripture were good enough at that time,” says Hamann. . . . “Was not Jeremiah, the prophet, drawn up safely out of his dungeon by means of old rags put under his arms?”—This may serve at least as an example of Hamann’s strange blending of humour with his earnestness, which is a trait especially his own—so far serious that it can hardly be called humour; yet often too grotesque to be quoted in connection with any serious argument.

To an English reader the question may seem natural—“Why should an original like Hamann be so long remembered?” The reply is this—because he affirmed, though he did not demonstrate, the existence and the moral force of certain intuitions—or say moral instincts—that in all ordinary times have been retained as the most precious endowments of humanity; nay, to use Herder’s words, as the very humanity of humanity. Our highest thought of God—of all that is worthy of his character—is not ours in a private sense; we do not possess it; it possesses us; it is God’s own thought, made known to us—perhaps dimly, in the depth of our own conscience—hence, when we see any reflection of it, we recognize it; hence we know that it can be fully possessed, or fully displayed, only by God himself. To continue the paraphrase—giving partly in our own words several of Hamann’s most characteristic ideas—It is

assumed in our days, says he, as an axiom that the understanding of such men as Spalding and Teller can show us the limit of all that is knowable: but—to say nothing here of any higher inspiration—genius is more than understanding. Call in an Aristotle, if you please, and let him find out the rules by which a true poem should be constructed. But see! here is the poem; breathed forth already, before the great critic has even begun his plan—a poem produced moreover by one who knows nothing whatever of all your æsthetic rules. This is the work of genius. You cannot measure the work of genius by your understanding. How then are you to measure or define what is possible or impossible—probable or improbable—in a stupendous work of genius, of which God himself is the author? Was the aid of your understanding required when the foundations of the heavens and the earth were laid in chaos? Do you know how or why it is that He who has for his messengers tempest, earthquake, and fire, chooses so often the “still, small voice” to announce his presence? This is one brief specimen of Hamann’s rhapsodical preaching.

Near the close of his life, Hamann was relieved from the pressure of his worldly cares. He was for some time entertained in the home of Jacobi; later he went to Münster, where he enjoyed the society of several friends who might be called pietists of a new school. In their circle—of which the Princess Gallitzin was the centre—Catholics and Lutherans were included with other persons whose religious belief was less definable.

Here Hamann, a pietist of his own school, was kindly received among persons remarkably heterogeneous, as regards their several positions in society and their distinct opinions. All were united by a common dread of atheism and revolution; and all were more or less desirous of doing something toward a restoration of faith, or of that which they in common regarded as the substance of Christianity. But on this point very little can be said distinctly, and at the same

time truly. For here was Hamann, however pietistic, hardly to be called orthodox in all respects. His protests against those whom he called "letter-idolators" were almost as vehement as those he made against rationalism. And here was Jacobi, who was a theist of his own school; and here sometimes came Lavater, whose faith was described by some of his friends, as an earnest longing to find a faith. With these remained associated, more in sympathy than in firm and distinct belief, such men as Kleuker, professor of Protestant theology at Kiel, and several Catholics, including the statesman Fürstenberg, Katerkamp, a theological writer, and bishop Sailer, especially noted for his love of Tauler's mystical writings. As it seemed difficult to find a common name for a circle so heterogeneous, Voss and other rationalists of his school—regarding as their enemies all who were numbered among the friends of the Princess Gallitzin—denounced them as "Jesuits," engaged in a conspiracy for the suppression of free inquiry. Lavater, who travelled about rather widely, was especially described by both Nicolai and Semler, as a "Jesuit" who had cast aside his disguise; and the charge was apparently to some extent confirmed; for it was observed that Lavater sometimes wore a small black cap. The fact was, there were more serious grounds on which the suspicion might have been founded. He was employed by many as their confessor. His eccentricities were many; but he always remained faithful to his position, as a minister of the Swiss Reformed Church.

To explain the facts here briefly given, nothing more is required than some little acquaintance with the party-names of the time. The Berlin men of light would not believe that any man could even pretend to be pious, unless he was a disguised "Jesuit." Therefore Lavater was denounced as a Jesuit; Jacobi was suspected; and there still remained a greater absurdity to be perpetrated. The young poet, Goethe himself—a thorough child of nature, if ever one lived, and as regards faith a heathen—was partly condemned

as a dreamer, or as a poet going on too far in a mystical way of thought that might possibly lead back to religion. Such were the general suspicions of the time, and they were strongly confirmed when Leopold von Stolberg—a poet, and one of Jacobi's younger friends—openly declared himself a Catholic. The vehement controversy that followed, was something that in the present time can hardly be understood. Jacobi, whose mildness of temper was usually remarkable, now expressed in earnest terms his censure of Stolberg's conduct, to whom at the same time he said farewell—for ever. Four years later, their friendship was restored.

LEOPOLD VON STOLBERG (1750-1819) was in his youth the friend of Goethe, with whom (in 1773) he made a tour in Switzerland. Like many of his contemporaries, he was, in the earlier days of his literary career, a declared revolutionist, and wrote poetry—often wild—inspired by the enthusiasm of Rousseau. Hamann—on account of his predictive tone, sometimes called the “Magus of the North”—said in 1775: “We are living in a time when some great revolution in the minds of men is in its incipient stage of fermentation.”—Stolberg was one among many whose minds were so disturbed; but he was also one of the first of those who, having passed through that incipient stage, were made profoundly conscious of their error—the notion then so prevalent, that man and society can be saved from evil without the aid of religion. He was one of the first to reject, as utter delusions, all such notions of progress as were founded on nothing better than a rejection of Christianity. This enlightenment of his mind preceded by several years his formal change of confession. At least some twelve years before the time (1800) when he declared himself a Catholic, he expressed, in his private letters, something like a dread respecting the deistic and irreligious spirit of the age. Thus for example, he wrote to Jacobi in 1788:—“In a sublime sense one may say, truth will defend itself; we need have no fear for the ultimate destiny of the

religion so often rejected. True; yet this is but poor consolation for a father who, in these times, sees children growing up around him, who will have to live among baptized—probably unbaptized—heathens. I say heathens; for this rational Christianity (so-called) cannot stand. There is nothing in the Word of God to support it, and it has no strength in itself; but must lapse into naturalism—atheism. I feel miserable, dwelling here among men who do not, in any definite and practical sense of the words, believe in God. What then is the worth of our friendship, when all that one esteems as holy is contemned by the other? Why should I seek points of contact with a man, when his whole tendency is leading him farther and farther away from the centre of all that I believe and love?"—Two years later, Stolberg, wishing to find a private tutor for his own children, writes thus to Jacobi:—"Let him be a Lutheran, or a member of the Reformed Church—but he must believe the Gospel."—In later years, Stolberg was led to disbelieve in the possibility of any restoration of religion within the pale of the Lutheran Church, while he held firmly the belief of his friend Lavater as regards the one great controversy of the age. This, said Lavater, is a warfare between God and the enemy of man. In the closing years of the century, the same belief grew more and more prevalent among the friends in Münster with whom Stolberg was then associated; and in 1800 he declared himself a member of the Roman Catholic Church.

Of the controversy that followed this step a detailed analysis is excluded by the limitation of our work. To a very large extent, the dispute was based on certain errors respecting facts, and thus was made personal. Of all the writers who came into the field against Stolberg the most severe and vehement was his former friend and fellow-student, Johann Heinrich Voss, a minor poet, now chiefly remembered on account of his able translations from Homer, Virgil, Horace, and other ancient poets. As to his religious tenets, Voss belonged to the extreme negative or left side

of rationalism, while in politics he was a friend of the French revolution, who did not change his creed even in the year 1794.

The later correspondence of Jacobi and his friend Stolberg shows that each, while remaining firm in his own position, treated tenderly the feelings of the other. Polemical topics were mostly avoided. In one of Stolberg's letters the rather difficult position maintained by his friend's theistic philosophy is thus clearly indicated :—

“As I understand you, one passage in your letter tells me—that you class together as imperfect or fallible all moral teachers, and all their systems; all that you accept is their general moral concordance, the common life and truth pervading their best teaching. Meanwhile your own conscience is your principal guide. . . . But I breathe more freely when I read what follows in yours; especially the passage where you have written these words :—‘Above all religions the religion of Christ has a sublime superiority here, in the promise assuring us, that His teaching [accepted] shall in all believers and everywhere be attended with a supernatural regenerating power.’—Here is the very ground on which I am happy to meet you with a cordial concurrence; and I would add—the promise has been and is fulfilled. Here is the test by which our faith must be tried, as indeed it always ought to be tried. Your saying is in full accordance with the teaching of our Lord.—Why do I hesitate to write this?—Is He not ours, and as truly yours, as mine?—In the days when He appeared upon this earth, and here wrought miracles, he gave us this test of his own teaching :—‘If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine [mine] whether it be of God.’ Here is the main practical support of our faith; and it is one which will ever remain the same. We appeal to the truth, that when accepted by the heart, this faith will in life display a renovating energy. Firm as our historical ground might still remain, it would still be only a true history, if it were not followed, attended, and continually confirmed by this mystic, regenerating power essentially belonging to our faith. And if the assertion must be called mysticism, let it be so; but I would add, that such mysticism is taught in Holy Scripture, and in places too numerous to be readily named.”

Another of Jacobi's friends was Lavater, of whose character—though so much has been said—a fair and clear estimate can hardly anywhere be found. “He was possessed

by his faith"—one critic has said—"but did not possess it." His general notion was that every man must be a Christian or an Atheist; yet he was tolerant. His writings are on the whole wordy and rhapsodical. Some of his best thoughts may be found here and there scattered in his letters. If one pedantic word might be used to indicate the peculiar tone of his pietism, it might be called an intense "subjectivity." Though his temper was mild and his kindness cordial, he was in his own pertinacious way a tyrant, and wished to stamp on everyone with whom he came in contact the impress of his own character. He was a teacher, a ruler, and indeed a confessor, for many who, by his singular power of persuasion, were made subject to his sway. His appearance and address were remarkably amiable and winning. Even Goethe, in his younger days, found something imposing in the presence of Lavater, of whose wishes one of the most earnest was his desire that the poet might be made a Christian.

JOHANN KASPAR LAVATER was born at Zürich in 1741. When hardly more than twenty-one years old, he suddenly gained celebrity by an act of remarkable courage. At his own cost and risk, he preferred against the high bailiff of the district a just charge of extortion. At this time Lavater had been accepted as a candidate of the Reformed Church. He honourably sustained the charge; but consequently found it expedient to leave Zürich for a time. His first tour in Germany made him acquainted with many friends, among whom some might be called his disciples. In opposition to the general opinions of the age, he maintained as his own a faith of which he was never ashamed. Unbelief had spread widely, he said, not because its own grounds were strong, but because the Church had already reduced her own faith to a minimum, and had neglected to guard the holy gifts once bestowed in order that they might be preserved for ever. These, he said, were especially the gifts of healing, and the power of casting out evil spirits. Like his friend Hamann, he had no trust in the efficacy of

any reasonings, however sound. The beauty and the amiability of religion must once more be seen; the life that is almost extinct must now be rekindled. "Again," he said, "we must become children in faith, in order that we may enter the Kingdom of Heaven. No man can attain a healthful maturity unless he has first passed through the stage of a teachable childhood." In numerous other passages of his letters, his journals, and his poems, he expresses an ardent desire that somewhere may appear—if only on a small scale at first—some fair representation of the Kingdom of Heaven. Let it be seen, he said; then it must be believed. Unhappily these aspirations of Lavater's heart were too closely associated with his credulity, and thus he was led into certain associations with conscious impostors, and into errors by which friends of true religion were offended and grieved. It is remarkable that among all his personal friends few remained faithful. His zeal was too little tempered with discretion. There was a want of quietude and repose in his faith, though there was never any want of courage. It was apparently a want of tact and quietness, or an excess of courage and perseverance in contention for the maintenance of his faith, that led to his loss of the friendship of Goethe.

The story of their earlier association, illustrated with excerpts from their correspondence, tells not a little of the time 1774-96. The interruption of their friendship—say rather its extinction—was mostly ascribed to the tiresome pertinacity of "the prophet"—so Lavater was often called—but the true, first cause was one lying far deeper, and one that, even in our own time, deserves serious attention. Goethe in his earlier manhood, and mainly throughout his later course of life, was mostly a man capable of deep reverence; yet his religion was a worship of nature. He was often and justly offended by the presumption and irreverence of some people calling themselves Christians; and in his later life the feeling was often expressed. He was offended by the freedom with which Lavater made

appeals to the inmost conscience. To use a theological term, Goethe was a born Pelagian, and he could know at heart little or nothing of the sentiments to which Lavater was almost continually making an appeal. The latter was somewhat like a physician, speaking of his own marvellous gifts of healing, or recommending his own medicines, and all the time addressing one who had a full consciousness of health and strength. Lavater could talk with all Herder's enthusiasm respecting the prospects of humanity. He loved to speak of a new world lying as it were dormant, and ready to unfold itself, as soon as mankind could be united in one common faith; but he never talked either of an independent and self-sufficient man, or of any all-sufficient light of nature. Thus he speaks—in one of his letters to Jacobi—respecting the impression left on his mind by a contemplation of nature. For a moment he assumes a materialistic and atheistic point of view—

“When I look upon nature—as a spectator, but not as a man having a moral will—what do I see?—A universal, everlasting, inevitable sequence of forces, one series deploying another—never resting—like the Rheinfall, throwing out cloud after cloud of spray—with an incessant roar—always changing—always the same—the spray ever rising, and ever falling into the gulph below. In a word, I see a *monstrum horrendum* ever self-producing and self-consuming. And such, we are told, is this *universum* spread all around us. Then comes the question:—How can it be, that this world or system [here he repeats the German for *monstrum*] has among other things produced me; for I cannot bear the thought of its restless ever self-producing and self-consuming process. I am a person, and must personify; I am human and must humanize in some way all that I see, and especially all those whom I find on a level with myself. Then how must I think of God?—I can see in myself all that Spinoza calls God. Here, in my body, is a mechanical structure, which clearly has been based on a plan; but I see more, even when I look into myself, and no farther.”

Lavater goes on to show in his own way how, by the law of his own inmost moral nature, he is led on, at once to seek for God, and to long for the intimate presence of a personal friend. It is remarkable that Lavater and Goethe could at any time be as good friends as they once were; for the

difference which was at last strongly marked in a letter written by the latter (1781) had always existed between them. In the letter referred to, Goethe rejected in decisive terms the conclusion to which his friend had long endeavoured to lead him. He could admire, he said, the enthusiasm and devotion of Lavater; but could not understand why the object must always be One. "There have been many teachers and benefactors of mankind," said Goethe:—"It is not implied in the nature of an idea that it can or should expend all its resources [or express itself fully] in an individual example."—These words were apparently intended to indicate the basis of an argument, that might be employed in the refutation of Lavater's main belief; and since his time they have been often quoted—especially by Strauss. Accepted as words coming from Goethe, they have seemed worthy of much notice; but they must imply a *petitio principii*, if employed as the basis of an argument against the doctrine to which his letter refers. He lays down here a law respecting natural evolution. Lavater had asserted his belief in the truth which he regarded as the centre of divine revelation—the truth of Christ's divinity.

The letter itself makes it clear that Goethe was at this time fully decided on the side of rationalism. Although in his later years he wrote and spoke more respectfully of Christianity, yet this expression of his opinions was never recalled. Here then is found the sum and substance of the result arrived at by Strauss and Baur in our own time, already accepted (in 1781) by Goethe as a conclusion not to be doubted by any reasonable man. To return to Lavater—his general intention must be estimated before judgment is pronounced on the errors and eccentricities that alienated so many of his friends and disciples. Goethe, after his tour in Italy, treated Lavater with contempt. On one occasion, when he passed through Zürich, he neglected to call upon his old friend. Apparently the poet had forgotten the time when he wrote to Lavater, and asked for spiritual advice

and consolation, saying :—"If you help me, you will do a service for many." How could the kindness of the reply be forgotten !

The life of Lavater was closed in Zürich, where he was born. In 1799, when the place was surrendered to the French, their troops were engaged in plundering shops and houses. Lavater, with characteristic kindness, did all that was possible to appease the soldiery, and to protect his neighbours. He was at one moment engaged in carrying out from a neighbour's house some wine to be distributed among the impatient soldiers, when one of them wantonly fired upon him, and he fell grievously wounded. He would let no attempt be made to seize the soldier. For more than a year, the intense suffering caused by his wound was patiently endured, and frequently he was overheard praying for the welfare of the man by whom the wound was inflicted. Among the papers left by Lavater, not the least noticeable was a poem addressed to his murderer, and expressing a fervent hope that he might meet him in heaven.

Individuality, united with a proselyting zeal, was the most salient trait in the character of Lavater ; and a similar remark might be made respecting his contemporary—Jung-Stilling. His writings for the most part convey but a faint notion of his personal influence. In a time when faith was for the most part feeble, where it was not absolutely dead, he almost suddenly gained celebrity, partly by the graphic and genial traits of his earlier writings, but more especially by their teaching respecting trust in Divine Providence. On the ground of his own experience, he believed in the efficacy of prayer. With this, his chief doctrine, there was united a singular trust in his own personal influence—a mystic power with which, as he believed, he was endowed, for the aid and consolation of his friends. Among those known in his earlier days, one of his best friends was Goethe, at that time a young student, and in his love of poetry an enthusiast. When it is noticed, that in his later life the poet was mostly averse to everything that tended

towards religious enthusiasm, it should be remembered, that in his youth he was well acquainted with Lavater and Jung-Stilling. The poet retained, for the most part, a liking for reserve in speaking of sacred themes. No doubt he remembered well, that reserve, self-suspicion, and moderation were the qualities most deficient among the pietistic friends of his earlier days.

JOHANN HEINRICH JUNG—better known by his assumed name Jung-Stilling—was born in 1740. After passing through some hardships of early life, he went to study medicine at Strassburg. Here in 1772 he fortunately became acquainted with Goethe, who gave him considerable aid; especially in preparing for the press the well-known book "Heinrich Stilling's Youthful Years." This book, published a hundred years ago, is still remembered. The author's later writings were partly theosophic. Among them may be named "Der graue Mann," a serial published in the course of the years 1795-1816. Jung-Stilling died in 1817. His writings, like those of Lavater—but especially his letters—express the feelings of earnest men, scattered here and there, and still endeavouring to do something against the general tendency of their time. They were sometimes led into error by their zeal; but it is also true that depression and melancholy were often, at that time, the attendants of men who had any serious care for religion. Jung-Stilling was especially a man of this class, and his depression was naturally increased, when he endeavoured to find in the study of Kant's philosophy a confirmation of his own faith. Soon disappointed, he returned to his reading of the New Testament. Kant, about the same time, wrote to Jung-Stilling as follows:—"You do well in returning to find your only consolation in the Gospel; there is the source of the truth that can nowhere else be found, even when we have surveyed the whole field of reason."

When so much may be said—and said truly—respecting the spread of negation, it is but natural to forget for a time

even some remarkable exceptions. These might be found here and there in North Germany; for example at Königsberg, where Kant was teaching, and again in Holstein, where lived Claudius, one of Jacobi's most intimate friends. But pietists—not strictly so-called—were, on the whole, more numerous in the South, and especially in Würtemberg, where lived mostly the disciples of Bengel and Oetinger. In the North, among literary men who enjoyed any noticeable popularity, religion as understood by quiet men of the old school had hardly a better friend than Claudius.

MATTHIAS CLAUDIUS (1740-1815) studied at Jena, and lived for some years at Wandsbeck (in Holstein). In his earlier life he was mostly engaged in literary pursuits, and afterwards was appointed Revisor of the Holstein Bank. His popular journal, "The Wandsbeck Messenger," supplied for some years wholesome light literature for many general readers, while its more serious papers served to lead men back from their unbelief towards a quiet and practical piety.

Humour, playfulness, and true poetry made the writings of Claudius attractive in their day. His sentiments have a childlike purity, and he likes to express them in a familiar, homiletic style, as if he were addressing some intimate relative and friend. Thus he writes in one of his letters addressed to a cousin:—"Have you made the experiment of turning away for a time from all disputation, and dwelling as it were in the contemplation of one object?—Have you read quietly the Gospel, and meditated long upon it?—Then you know something of the life, the words, of One whom again men in our age would reject. The love; the lowliness; the quietude—and yet withal the majesty, before which one must bend the knee—you know something of these traits? You have thought of the question—What would the world be if those traits were imitated; if those precepts were carried out in life? . . . That He should be contemned—rejected.—It is enough to make one's hair turn gray. . . . Yet I did not mean to suggest any fear respect-

ing the destiny of the truth itself. No; this will remain firm. The question is, how can men live without it? You and I cannot. We are not independent; but need the help of one who will lift us up, and hold us up while we live here, and will support our drooping heads when we die."

Claudius writes mostly in this homiletic vein; but where he remembers that logic is demanded by his opponents, he sometimes intimates that he has good reasons for his faith. Yet faith is first and last, he says:—"All that we see, in the heavens above and in the earth below, can serve but as a confirmation of a faith within us; or call it a superior knowledge of ourselves, a self-consciousness that gives us heart and courage to master and correct as it were all the results of our own experience. Amidst all these splendours of creation, we feel and know that we ourselves are greater than all that we behold. We long to know more than can be told by all these objects of sense by which we are surrounded; for we have more in our own soul. We have even the germ of a perfect life—the ideal, as men now call it. And without this ideal we cannot live, while we cannot rest so long as we know it only as our own ideal. Hence we look forth in inquiry, to find, if possible, symbols that indicate the presence of the idea. We find its light reflected from mirrors—visible and invisible—or spread over glowing pictures, that sometimes one is tempted to take for portraits. But pictures, after all, are only pictures. They please for a moment; but cannot satisfy the soul. . . . We have life, and know that it is given; light, and know that it does not originate in us. We seek to know the source, the giver—One who has life and light in Himself." . . . "These are some of the thoughts that have led me to my conviction:—for our own true development, and as a basis of our moral life, we must have faith. I mean the faith of a Christian."

At one time, when the domestic circumstances of Claudius were difficult, he was generously assisted by Jacobi. This led to their friendship, which had, however, deeper grounds

in their religious sympathies. "Our ideas," said Jacobi, "are like the radii of a circle, which can neither run parallel nor intersect one another." Such quiet and practical faith as was seen in the life of his friend Claudius was for Jacobi at once a mystery and a self-evident truth. As he often confessed, he longed for that repose. "I have been young, and now am old," he said; "and now I leave this on record:—that never have I seen anywhere true lasting happiness—joy in life—save among believing, pious people—I mean to say, believers of the old-fashioned school."—"And if their practical Christian life is to be seen again"—Claudius would reply—"if their moral firmness and their happiness are to be again restored—their faith must first of all be restored."

Seldom or never has any earnest and inquiring man held finally a position like that so long maintained by Jacobi. It was especially made definite in contrast with the views of his friend Claudius, and was always in substance equivalent to the doctrine enunciated in Jacobi's book "On Divine Things and their Revelation." Claudius asserts that man has a capacity of receiving divine truth which his unaided reason cannot discover. The truth must first be given. To this Jacobi replies by saying, in effect—"True; but for me the history becomes a divine revelation only when accepted as accordant with that which I know as divine in my own soul. The history can awaken the idea that is already existent in my soul; but it can give me nothing that is really new. It serves but as a medium of suggestion or presentation."—Thus Jacobi—in his own way and with higher aspirations than were prevalent in his time—still held the opinion so widely then spread: that no difference more than one of degree had ever existed, or could exist, between Christianity and other forms of religion. He, therefore, never gives his mind wholly and devoutly to historical religious inquiry, so sure does he feel at the outset that nothing historical can ever lead him out of his own position. He speaks, indeed, of Christ as being at once

"the mightiest among the holy and the holiest among the mighty;" but he hardly goes on to consider what such words must imply. He grants that we have records showing that the opening Christian era was a time when a spiritual and divine life absolutely sinless was manifested in this world; but he pays little attention to the claims of authority asserted in union with that manifestation. So when Claudius speaks of dependence on a Mediator, the reply given by Jacobi amounts to the suggestion, that here a relation of likeness is mistaken for one of dependence. Of the aid afforded by the Church—however understood or defined—little or nothing is said by Jacobi, though he is one who is especially conscious of the aid and consolation supplied by true friendship. As regards faith, he assumes a position of independence, and dwells in a solitude; yet here—it is worthy of notice in one so sincere—he feels at times a serious disquietude, of which expressions are here and there found in his writings. He feels that the world around him, with its passions, sins, and sufferings, is real, permanent, and powerful, while his faith, at times expansive and buoyant, is but ideal, fluctuating, and evanescent. Respecting such vicissitudes in his spiritual life, there are found in his writings many passages of which the substance is given in a few lines written by Wordsworth:—

"I must needs confess,
That 'tis a thing impossible to frame
Conceptions equal to the soul's desires,
And the most difficult of tasks to keep
Heights which the soul is competent to gain.
Man is of dust; ethereal hopes are his,
Which when they should sustain themselves aloft,
Want due consistence; like a pillar of smoke,
That with majestic majesty from earth
Rises, but having reached the thinner air,
Melts, and dissolves, and is no longer seen."

Of the weakness and the danger of moral dependence on sentiments, or on feelings that may for a moment be taken for inspirations, Jacobi was well aware; and in his didactic

story of "Allwill," he sometimes writes earnestly in apparent opposition to his own views. "A man must have rules," he says; "rules, fixed, unalterable—standing firm as rocks, however the waves may dash against them. Of trusting wholly in your impulses be warned, Allwill, by my own experience; for I sometimes tremble, when looking back on the quicksands where I might have been lost. Duty, constantly held in view—this must be our sole guide, while we are striving on toward the goal, at which our safe arrival may seem impossible. Yes, it may be proved to be impossible; yet onward, still onward we must go. . . . Oh, were I but strong and swift to run in this way—the only way leading to divine truth, and divine happiness."—Again the reader may be reminded of lines written by Wordsworth—

"Though immovably convinced, we want
Zeal, and the virtue to exist by faith,
As soldiers live by courage; as by strength
Of heart, the sailor fights with roaring seas.

What then remains?—To seek
Those helps, for his occasions ever near
Who lacks not will to use them: vows renewed
On the first motion of a holy thought;
Vigils of contemplation; praise, and prayer—
A stream which, from the fountain of the heart
Issuing however feebly, nowhere flows
Without access of unexpected strength.
But above all, the victory is most sure
For him who, seeking faith by virtue, strives
To yield entire submission to the law
Of conscience—conscience revered and obeyed,
As God's most intimate presence in the soul,
And his most perfect image in the world."

This may be accepted as a summary of Jacobi's practical religion; and there can be no doubt of the conclusion—that so far as it goes it is true; it is the first and indispensable half of religion. The question follows: Why could not a man so true as Jacobi find the other half? Grasping at once the inner and the outer revelation—why could he not

firmly believe and say: "These are one?" What was it that prevented their union? The reply must be—his own philosophy.

What was this philosophy?—The few fixed ideas so-called were sometimes made obscure in his own writings, because they were there often connected with controversial writing against the systems of Spinoza, Kant, and others. In controversy—especially as directed against principles assumed by Kant and Fichte—considerable acuteness of intellect was shown by Jacobi, and it is mostly with regard to his power in criticism that he has been classed with philosophers, or metaphysical writers. His own positive views may be reduced to a few assertions of his belief.

First of all, as regards both religion and ethics, he distrusts all reasoning, and asserts that we are and must be guided by faith.

We depend on faith, he says—on our innate faith in the impressions received through our senses—for all our knowledge of the natural, or so-called real world by which we are surrounded. These impressions are classified and made clear by the use of our understanding. So far as real experience, based on sensation, is concerned, our reasonings are valid; but they apply only to things finite and dependent. Every logical conclusion must rest on a presumption, and when this is made a conclusion, it can be done only by some reference to another presumption. Thus we must always be led back to some basis in faith, even when we are discoursing only of things finite and dependent. The understanding itself is finite, and all that it can know is finite; it can therefore tell us nothing of the infinite—nothing of God; of the soul; of immortality; or of any eternal moral and religious ideas. Yet such ideas are known. How then are they known?—"By faith," he replies: just as we come to know nature, by means of faith in our senses, so we come to know what is supernatural and divine, by means of faith in our intuitive reason.

The force of this reply may be seen, when it is viewed in

contrast with some other replies to the same question. The ordinary deism that had so long prevailed, rested in the assurance that all that man could require to know of God, of immortality, and of immutable ethics, could be discovered by man's reason, when rightly employed in the study of nature—including his own nature. On the contrary, Kant taught, that our ideas of God, the soul, and immortality, —cannot be discovered by any study of surrounding nature; nor can they be found indeed by any exercise of our intellect. Yet the ideas called eternal moral ideas are, in the strongest sense of the words, our own; they belong essentially to the moral conscience of man, which Kant calls our "practical reason." Of this conscience, which indeed is the substance of man, the authority is primary, absolute, universal.

The basis of all religious truth is ethical. Yet the ideas of God and immortality are not ours, in that immediate sense in which moral laws are ours. "Act so," says Kant, "that your rule of action may be a rule for all men." This is the summary of the law within us. With our knowledge of the law is implied an idea of a lawgiver, and ideas of rewards and punishments must follow. These then are postulated—demanded by our practical reason—our conscience; and they must be held to be true; yet they cannot be demonstrated. This is the position assumed by Kant as an ethical teacher.

Here it is that Jacobi places himself in opposition to Kant's teaching. Our "divine ideas" of God and immortality cannot, says Jacobi, be demonstrated; neither can it be allowed that they should hold in our mind a secondary position, or be regarded only as "postulates." The notion implies a process of reasoning, and such reasoning as may be called weak; for it amounts to this—I cannot recognize and obey the law, without a thought of the Lawgiver, or without a belief, that my obedience and my well-being are essentially and eternally united; but here, in this life, it is clear that they are not always so united. This is true, says

Jacobi; it truly describes an inevitable union or sequence of ideas existing within my own mind; but how does it lead me out beyond the bounds of my own mind? How does my own sequence of ideas supply any sure basis of belief, or knowledge, respecting the objective existence of God, or the immortality of the soul? These indeed are the chief articles of my belief; but how are they received, and known, and firmly held?

"By faith," he replies, "by an immediate act of faith, excited and maintained in me by a divine revelation, taking place in my inmost being. Of this faith I can give you no further account, and certainly can give no demonstration of its grounds. Its existence may indeed be indicated by my words; but only for those in whom it already exists."

The relations of Jacobi's philosophy with his views of religion may be shown more distinctly, when his teaching is compared with the more systematic doctrines of Kant and Fichte. All three—Jacobi, Kant, and Fichte—were alike agents in leading to a remarkable change in the current of religious sentiment. There was felt in their time, among thoughtful men of all confessions—and among some of no confession—a general fear, lest the world should be left destitute of all religion; lest the very first instinct that in heathendom had led to some vague knowledge of God, should become extinct. So far the general course of deism—otherwise called rationalism—had led to nothing more than a series of negations. It has been observed (p. 2) that modern deism—viewed in its proper isolation, or set apart from its borrowed ethics—is, as regards both authority and moral power, as empty as the abstract formula of Robespierre. This formula, it is allowed, does not fully represent the eclectic deism held or professed by all those writers—mostly called deists—who in the eighteenth century were destructively active in England, Germany, and France. They vainly endeavoured to connect their very short creed with good morals, more or less diluted, but mostly borrowed

originally from Christianity. Their connection of creed and morals was accordingly a bond only mechanical, or accidental, and of course it could not endure. Once assumed an absolute separation of the human and the divine—there can be no religion; and morals, deprived of their motive power, their inspiration, their life, must die. As a substitute for true ethics, there may be established, for a moment, some theory called eudaimonistic, or utilitarian, and founded on what seems prudent or wise, to this man or to that; but the theory so founded can have no stability. At the heart of man the truth is felt and known, that absolute obedience is due only to one divine authority; and where no revelation of the divine will is known, man is his own master—nay; every man is his own master. Therefore—since abstract deism can show no revelation of a divine will, more than is manifested in nature—deistic philosophy must, so far as it prevails, lead to negation of both religion and morality. If the inevitable nature of the sequence is not always clearly seen, it is because the proper creed of deism, and its own natural tendency, are both disguised, when they are mechanically, or by force of habit, connected with Christian morals.

If these conclusions seem doubtful, they must be tested by references to the pages of history. There can be no wish to contradict here any well-attested facts; to disparage the morality of an individual like Socrates; or to deny that, in ancient Chinese and Hindoo, as in Greek and Roman literature, are found moral precepts of the highest character—including some always identical with the highest morals of Christianity. All these facts granted—how can they be utilized, so as to invalidate our conclusion: that deism, beginning in a negation of the truth that gives life to Christian morality, must end in a negation of this Christian morality itself? Still the conclusion will be doubted, and this must not excite our wonder; for even Kant, the philosopher, could dream—that Christian ethics, left destitute of all the faith that makes them powerful, could still exist, and

might indeed be made the basis of a universal law for all peoples, and for all time. Human authority, then—our own “practical reason”—is sufficient, and has power to enforce laws founded on the divine maxim—“It is more blessed to give than to receive.” To name such a proposition is to refute it.

There must be a deep source of the error, by which an intellect like Kant’s could be led so far astray. The chief source of all philosophical errors lies in one first error; in a false abstraction—a forgetfulness of life and reality—and to this chief error men are especially exposed, when they have too much confidence in the power and the authority of the intellect. It is the power by which the results of experience—external and internal—are clearly generalized and classified, and if possible are placed in an order showing their own true relations. The difficulty attending the process is to avoid a loss or diminution of actual, real experience, while we are generalizing its results, and are seeking to place them in some ideal order. In a word, abstract philosophy is as easy as it is useless; but comprehensive philosophy is exceedingly difficult, and until the end of the world must belong only to a few among the millions of mankind. They must be men intensely sympathetic, and endowed with intellectual powers at once comprehensive and clear.

Of the chief danger of philosophy—especially when set forth as a substitute for faith—Jacobi was profoundly conscious. This one fact serves as a key to some obscure passages in his writings, and at the same time shows the source of their general religious tendency. Rather than trust in reasonings, respecting morals or religion, he would be guided by his own intuitive faith; and as he did not find this faith always a safe and strong guide, he freely expressed his willingness to accept the guidance of a positive religion, if he could but first be convinced of its claim. But for him nothing historical and objective could have a claim equal to that preferred by his own intuition. The principle

thus asserted by Jacobi, was severely criticized in his own day ; and it is now justly regarded as one-sided, or limited in an arbitrary way. "There is," he says, "in our inmost conscience, a sure knowledge of the supernatural, of God, and of divine things ; and of all the knowledge that we possess this divine knowledge is the most certain ; but it can never be authoritatively displayed in any history, and it can never be reduced to the form of exact science. . . . Faith supplies that to which our reasonings cannot lead us. There is a light within us, and yet it is not ours, but is divine, and in this light we see at once ourselves and God." By means of the same light, he recognizes—as he says—its brightest radiance shining forth in the person of Christ, and he rejoices while he feels assured, that the light shining *there* is also shining *here*, within himself. But he will not recognize in Christ the source of the divine light shining in the souls of men.

Many were the objections urged by his friends against the one-sided character of the faith asserted by Jacobi. "Religion is for all men," his friend Claudius would say ; "but what is your answer, when men say—as they do—that your faith is but a dream, or a fixed idea, having no existence save in your own mind ? What can you say in reply, if you can appeal to no objective presence, and to no history greater or more authoritative than yourself and your own experience ?" Jacobi could estimate well the force of the objection, and he sometimes made an endeavour to meet it, but never with success. There had long prevailed among men—otherwise various in their opinions—a strong tendency to intellectual egotism. Men could find truth nowhere save in themselves—in their own reason, or in their common sense, or in a certain insight, or in an intuitive faith, as Jacobi said. If a word, mostly used with a moral and unfavourable meaning, might for once be used in a purely intellectual sense, then it might be truly said, that Jacobi—however generous, amiable, and open to religious influence—was one of the most confirmed egotists of his time.

Another great egotist was Kant, though his moral character was, to say the least, kind and humanitarian, in the highest sense of the word. A third egotist was Fichte—*facile princeps*. His philosophical egotism soon arrived at a climax, by which he himself was apparently surprised. However that may be, it is certain that, in his later philosophy, he assumed toward religion a new position, and one indicating a sense of dependence on the aid afforded by revelation. Of this great revolution in the views of Fichte, his disciple, Carlyle, apparently knew nothing.

Jacobi, Kant and Fichte—all three endeavoured to find, without the aid of Christ, a sure basis for ethics, and for ethics so pure and sublime that, when viewed in themselves—or considered apart from their first principles and motives—they can hardly be distinguished from our ethics called Christian. All three—in their distinct ways—confessed their failure.

The dissatisfaction of Jacobi, respecting his own faith, was often freely expressed; especially in several letters written shortly before the close of his life. "My attempt"—said he, more than once—"to fix for permanent use any maxims founded on my own evanescent feelings is too often a failure; it is like the plan of tying a knot in a handkerchief, to remind one of his own purpose. Afterwards we see indeed the knot; but forget what was our intention when it was tied." . . . "That historical and sound-hearted faith of our forefathers—the faith that made them one in creed and sentiment—we must have *that* in substance restored, if ever we are again to have healthful religious sentiment; but how to restore that faith I do not see." . . . "Alas, from my heart I agree in all you say respecting the insufficiency of my own philosophizing." . . . "In regard to historical religion, there is now taking place in Germany something like a restorative movement. I was lately talking about it, with the two sons of Bishop Sack, of Berlin; and I wished to learn especially, what were the bases of the movement. The younger son was remarkably

zealous, and my questions therefore were mostly addressed to him. He could see that my inquiry was sincere and earnest; but he could refer only to the ground of his own religious experience. This is nothing more than my own way of proof. Just so, when I talk with Bishop Sailer, I find that his ultimate basis of faith is—like my own—an appeal to his own conscience." . . . "I have been struck by one of Twesten's remarks, which you may find in one of his speeches lately addressed to the clergy:—'Educated men,' says he, 'are now asking for some spiritual teaching higher than such as is supplied in our ordinary preaching; and if we cannot give them what they want, we may as well remain silent.'—Here Twesten is evidently speaking of teaching that is communicable—of doctrine that can be accepted by philosophers, as well as by theologians. But where is this higher teaching to be found?—I can give no answer." . . . "One of my good friends, having lately read the third volume of my collected writings, writes to me very kindly about it; but he adds the following remarks:—'What a miserable thing it is in our time, that so many sincere, truth-seeking men, like yourself, after many years of inquiry, can find nothing clear and sure in their own religious belief and doctrine—nothing that can serve even to quell their own doubts; and of course nothing that can afford any safe guidance to other inquirers. What discords there are among the men called thinkers!—The thought has made me melancholy, while I have been reading your book.'"

There were, however, some critics whose appreciation of Jacobi's writings was far higher. "Here"—says one in effect—"we converse with a pure soul—one free from all religious prejudices, bound by no confession, restricted by no ties of any profession, led only by that inspiration which he recognizes in his own purest sentiments—and whither is he led?—Whose is the portraiture in which he recognizes the perfect—the divine?—And if he does not adore, or formally worship here, what restrains him, save an abstract, meta-

physical idea of unity, in which, as he supposes, personal distinction cannot exist?" The thought implied here was generalized. Appeals to convictions based on purity of sentiment were made more prominent now among Christian evidences, as adduced by several theological writers who more or less strictly accepted the first principles of Jacobi's philosophy. There were numbered in this class of writers such men as Hase, De Wette, Fries, Koppen, and Steudel.

"Christianity," said Bishop Sailer—a Catholic—"had on the heart of Jacobi a closer grasp than he himself was aware of at all times." "There are various mansions in the world unseen," said a Lutheran preacher—when referring to Jacobi's decease—"and one need not feel extreme anxiety respecting the close of a philosopher's life, when he dies praying."

CHAPTER VII.

KANT'S MORAL PHILOSOPHY.

DURING the next twenty years following the decease of Lessing (1781) there was one subject that in Germany especially occupied the attention of thoughtful men. This was the new metaphysical teaching introduced by Kant in his "Critique of Pure Reason." Its first publication (1781) was the beginning of a new era, and led inevitably to all the later speculative philosophy of Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, and their disciples. The true beginning of this remarkable movement—one that has made a revolution in the world of intellectual inquiry—took place, not in Germany, but in Scotland. To disturb profoundly the faith on which alone can be founded sure morals in the individual soul, in the family, and in society at large, restless men of almost all European nations (called educated) have indeed written and said enough in our times; and the results of their destructive work are surely sufficiently apparent now, when even men advanced in freethinking and calling themselves "Panteists" are expressing a dread lest the world should soon be left utterly destitute of religion. "German Professors have done this," is a saying sometimes heard, and one implying a common belief—not utterly unfounded—yet there is something more to be remembered. The almost empty deism so popular in Kant's earlier years was imported from England, and of all the theories of unbelief ever held, the most dismal and desolating came from Scotland. There it was first suggested by the well-known

historian, David Hume. He did not develop his principle; but rather asserted it, in his own cold and apathetic way. In Königsberg, however, it was profoundly studied by Immanuel Kant—probably then the only man in the world who fully understood the gist of what Hume had intended to say. “Man is a mere bundle of sensations”—said Hume, in effect—“his general notions of cause and effect, and of substance, of God, and of truth—yea, and even his notion of himself—these are all nothing more than the results of man’s own habits of thinking, which have been produced in him by frequent sequences of sensations.” One sensation follows another. Here is the end of philosophy.

“This thought,” said Kant, “aroused me—then a student of Wolff’s philosophy—out of my dogmatic slumber.”—This is intended to say, that Hume’s suggestion of an utter universal unbelief—not correctly called “scepticism”—was so viewed by Kant, that it led him to such inquiries as had for their ultimate result the critical philosophy. Of this elaborate and difficult system some brief account must be given, but chiefly in order to lead on naturally to the moral and practical teaching of Kant respecting ethics, their authority, and their union with the claims of revealed religion. Our conscience, he says—*not* our understanding—leads us to our belief in God.

IMMANUEL KANT was born at Königsberg in 1724. His parents, belonging to the middle class, were persons of high moral respectability; and his mother was a pious woman, to whose good influence he was deeply indebted. From the early teaching bestowed on the child was derived that love of strict veracity by which the philosopher was distinguished.

When sixteen years old, he entered the University of his native place, where he was a diligent student of both mathematics and physics, though his special department of study was theology. Later, he was for some years engaged as a private tutor; and in the course of these years he now and then supplied the place of a preacher in some

country places near Königsberg. Meanwhile he read diligently, and occasionally produced essays on philosophy, astronomy, and some branches of physical science. With regard to these his earlier writings, he was usually classed with the popular philosophers of his time—such men as Garve and Mendelssohn—though he soon departed from their routine, and began to think for himself. His progress in the studies leading toward the development of his own philosophy was slow and careful. The main principles of his chief work—the “Critique of Pure Reason”—had been established in his own mind, at least some ten years before 1781, when the book was published.

When forty-six years old, Kant was appointed Professor of Logic and Metaphysics in Königsberg, and this position he held for twenty-seven years. The great and epoch-making work above named was his chief contribution to intellectual philosophy, but left unexplored all questions relating to ethics and their relation to religious belief. The philosophical world of that time was startled when told by Kant's “Critique,” that the human understanding, to which such large powers had been ascribed, could find out nothing true respecting God, the soul, immortality, and morality. On these, and on all other topics usually called ethical and theological, Kant gave the results of his studies in his later book, the “Critique of Practical Reason,” which was published in 1787. His work entitled “Religion within the bounds of Pure Reason”—published in 1793—is the book that chiefly requires our notice. Kant died in 1804.

The character of Kant is one comparatively so simple that its outline is easily drawn. His mind, his physical frame, and his social circumstances were all well harmonized with the chief purpose of his life. Of middle stature, the body was spare and frail, yet for the most part healthful. His clear, blue, and well-opened eyes—not seldom radiant with quiet humour—were more than usually expressive when he was engaged in friendly converse, in which—next to study—he found his greatest delight. Apart from the

modest and social dinner, to which he loved now and then to invite a few friends, his usual routine of life was like that of a hermit. He was never married. All the small cares of the household were left in the charge of one manservant, in whose fidelity the philosopher placed absolute reliance. In his later life he enjoyed the retirement of his small house and garden, situated in the suburbs; and here the routine of everyday life went on quietly, as if moved by clock-work. Kant never travelled beyond the bounds of his native province; yet he was remarkably well acquainted with facts in geography and topography. His discursive talk with his friends was mostly various, interesting, and free from pedantry. He was an extensive general reader, though he never collected a large library. In fiction, he especially admired the English novels of Richardson, and was not left untouched by the sorrows of "Pamela" and "Clarissa Harlowe."

So far had Kant sympathy with the hopeful humanitarian and educational tendencies of his time, that he read with enthusiastic interest all the writings of Rousseau, especially the educational romance of "Émile." When this epoch-making book first came out (1762) it was seized and read by Kant with such avidity that, for several days, he forgot to take his usual constitutional walk. There is more than a trivial interest in this anecdote; it indicates the first suggestion of leading ideas and motives by which Kant was guided throughout the later course of his moral teaching. No doubt, in his earlier life, he was as hopeful as any of his young friends, the popular philosophers. They believed—though not so fervidly as their teacher, Rousseau—in the sufficiency of human reason, and in the radical goodness of human nature. These assumptions—once regarded by philosophers as their chief articles of faith—were both at last rejected by Kant. He retained, however, an exalted, ideal notion respecting man's true moral nature, while he had also a firm conviction, that its original order had been inexplicably perverted by some "radical evil." This was

Kant's general idea of a moral dualism in human nature. It led him on to his later theory respecting a union of moral philosophy and religion. Here his teaching is partly indistinct and unsatisfactory.

In his advanced years, Kant fell into a condition of such physical and mental debility as might be called a second childhood. Had pride of intellect been the trait most prominent in his middle life, there might have been something too painful in the aspect of his old age. But his moral teaching, and no doubt his belief, had always one main tendency; and this was to abate the pride of intellect, and to make high morality—which he sometimes called “humanity”—independent and supreme. Speaking on one occasion of a future life—“I could be contented there,” said he, “with the converse of a few honest souls like Lampe” (his servant). On another occasion, the accidental expression of a friend suggested the thought, that with intellect moral sentiment might in a like ratio decay; “but” said Kant, “I have not yet lost the feeling of humanity.”

Here may be added a word to correct certain errors that might be suggested by some vague accounts of Kant's practical belief. It was not limited by the bounds of his intellectual system. He confessed that he could not prove the existence of God, of the soul, or of rewards and punishments in a life unknown to reason; but for him these were names of realities, of which he was assured by his conscience, which he called “practical reason.” This name for conscience is but one example of a terminology that has made obscure several ideas that, otherwise expressed, might have been readily understood. His style is careful, precise, and sometimes animated; but its long sentences are too numerous. As a brief example, the following passage is taken from his work on *æsthetics*. It may be noticed that here—where he is speaking of sentiments called sublime—the basis of his judgment is still moral:—

“Not every object suggestive of fear is called sublime; though nature, viewed in any aspect that is to excite in us a sentiment truly

sublime, must first appear as capable of exciting terror. The thought of an impossibility of resistance on our part must first be suggested; yet terror must not prevail. . . . Bold, overhanging rocks, threatening to bury us—dark, lowering clouds, mass over mass, piled up in the sky, and rent asunder by lightnings, attended with roars of thunder—volcanoes, earthquakes, hurricanes, and storms at sea: all these manifestations of physical power in the world surrounding us, make our own power of resistance seem contemptible, as indeed it is in the sphere of external nature. There we must first find for ourselves a place of shelter and security, before we can collect ourselves and become conscious at once of our insignificance and our true greatness. We now feel as before, that in the sphere of nature we are comparatively powerless; but at the same time we recognize, in our moral being, the presence of a power that is supernatural—a power that will not yield, though confronted by all the might of the material universe.”

Of Kant's chief works, the first defines strictly the limitations of such knowledge as man can acquire. It is shown, first, that of surrounding objects we can know only the appearances—not the substance—and in the next place, our own subjective notions are classified. In the next treatise, we escape from Hume's desolating negation and find, in Kant's ethical system, not only firm teaching respecting our duty, but also grounds—not intellectually demonstrative—for our belief in the immortality of the soul, and in the existence of a Supreme Lawgiver. The third treatise—“Religion within the bounds of Pure Reason”—is especially remarkable for its inconsequence in logic. To this the writer was inevitably led by the narrow limitation of his religious belief.

Of the first and the most laborious of these three treatises, a fair analysis would be too extensive to be given here. The main principle—in substance identical with Hume's sweeping negation—is defended with the greatest tenacity, yet not without some logical failures, that long ago were exposed by Jacobi's criticism. That minimum of firm and good teaching which was contained in the popular philosophy of deism—chiefly in its natural theology—was now rejected

by Kant. The truth even of such natural theology as had once seemed identical with common sense was denied. Everywhere and in all times, one faith had hitherto prevailed—that men by the use of their senses and their reason might come to some sure knowledge of truth. The knowledge so acquired was indeed limited; but was not merely “subjective,” as now defined by Kant.

The “Critique of Pure Reason” contains an elaborate analysis and classification of our rules of thought, here styled categories. In the language of every-day life, these are the forms in which the materials supplied by sensation are arranged; the forms are ours, but would be left empty if our experience did not supply contents. The contents, however, are merely phenomena, and the sum of all that we can know is finite. The negative results of the analysis are obvious. For our “pure reason” no proof of God’s existence can be valid, says Kant. On the other side, it has been asserted, that our greatest possible idea of the Supreme Being must imply the notion of his existence. For if it does not, says Anselm, we may add to our idea of God the predicate of his existence; and then our greatest idea will be made greater—which is absurd. Few now will accept the schoolman’s logic; but the truth which he would demonstrate is by many accepted intuitively; it is still maintained by many thoughtful men, that the idea of God implies his existence. The denial of Kant in this instance is in the highest degree important, and lays bare as it were the whole basis of his subjective philosophy. He asserts in fact that between our highest idea of a Supreme Being, and the truth that He exists, there is no rational union. Yet he adds, that what we cannot know, we must believe; for our moral conscience actually demands our belief in the existence of God. This is a doctrine earnestly enforced by Kant; but it does not affect the conclusion—that, in accordance with his own intellectual system, he is compelled to say:—Man cannot know that God exists; in other words, our intellect is atheistic, though our moral conscience, if

obeyed, must lead us to God. In the ideas of God, immortality, and retribution, the problems mooted by our conscience find their solution.

As soon as Kant begins to speak of ethics—immutable, absolute, divine—he assumes the stern tone of a lawgiver. The law is absolute, he says, and to obey is your duty; therefore you are free, for no slavery is moral; and you *can* obey; for absolute reason does not contradict itself by demanding an obedience that is impossible. True; the sacrifice of your present happiness may be demanded. The ultimate union of duty and happiness is postulated by the authority demanding your obedience; but obedience must not be made dependent on any calculation or expectation of reward. That would make all morality dependent on accidents or probabilities. “Act so that your own act may exemplify a rule of conduct for all men.” This is your rule of life, says Kant; and it is one that can be made subject to no conditions. It is a law to be obeyed as one proclaimed by the voice of God Himself. Not in the sphere of the intellect, but here, in the sanctuary of conscience, you must recognize the immediate presence of an absolute authority. In a word, your conscience is your guide.

Next may be noticed briefly those doctrines of religion which Kant accepts or recognizes, as doctrines corresponding well with his ethics. A life of perfect goodness or holiness, he says, is demanded by the law within us, and therefore the realization of such a life must be possible. There is therefore a *summum bonum* attainable by man, though not in the present life; he is therefore immortal, and is capable of enjoying true happiness—a harmony of his whole being. The natural will of man must eventually be made accordant with the holiness demanded by the law within us. Such harmony—here interrupted by evil—can be restored only by One whose goodness and power are absolute. We are thus led on—not by our intellect, but by our moral endeavour—to believe, not only that God exists, but also “that he is a rewarder of them that dili-

gently seek him.”—It is thus seen that Kant is led by his moral inquiry to a practical theism, according well with Wordsworth's teaching in the lines following:—

“ One adequate support
For the calamities of mortal life
Exists—one only—an assured belief
That the procession of our fate, howe'er
Sad or disturb'd, is order'd by a Being
Of infinite benevolence and power,
Whose everlasting purposes embrace
All accidents, converting them to good.
The darts of anguish fix not where the seat
Of suffering hath been thoroughly fortified
By acquiescence in the Will supreme
For time and for eternity—by faith,
Faith absolute in God, including hope,
And the defence that lies in boundless love
Of His perfections; with habitual dread
Of aught unworthily conceived, endured
Impatiently, ill-done, or left undone
To the dishonour of His holy name.”

Does Kant find rest, or a solution of all moral questions, in the creed of theism? No. He has so far described an ethical system that *ought* to exist; but the question must arise—he is too veracious to suppress it—“Where and when has this code of moral laws, so clearly defined, ever been enforced or made actual among mankind?” Kant now turns to consider the actual state of human nature; he sets aside the abstract and Utopian notions of Rousseau and the popular philosophers; and he confesses a fact too well known, yet by them denied or concealed—the sinfulness of human nature. There is, he says, “a radical evil” in the heart of man. The order that ought to exist there does not exist; on the contrary, to a deplorable extent the natural will enslaves the moral, and sensualism predominates over mind and soul. As the Church tells us, man is fallen—sinful—guilty. This is the conviction by which Kant is led to study the relations existing between his own ethical

system on one side and Christian teaching on the other. His inquiry leads him on to admit such truths as these :— that in the warfare of good and evil, waged in the heart of man as in society, and in the world at large, ethical teaching like his own, however true, must be feeble ; to enforce moral laws authority is required, such as abstract reasonings can never have ; all good men must be united together, and firmly, in order to oppose the overwhelming spread of evil ; they must have the strength of a large incorporation, and the body of which they are members must have a Head—ideal, ever present, and supremely authoritative, though not visible—in a word, the actual moral state of mankind requires the aid of the Church founded by Christ.

This remarkable confession suggests the question—Did Kant accept the Gospel as a divine revelation ; or did he accept only the ethics of Christianity ?

Veracity was a noble trait in the character of Kant. He had taught, that ethics must be regarded as the substance of religion ; that their main principle—from which their several laws might easily be deduced—was one clearly manifest in the conscience of mankind. It would apparently follow, that no divine revelation could be required ; it might indeed on Kant's own grounds be contended, that no such revelation was possible. But the sincerity of the almost self-sufficient moralist now compelled him to make a sacrifice of philosophical consistency. However dear to him his renown for logical thinking, *magis amica veritas* was his motto, whenever he had to describe facts. It is “an undeniable *fact*,” said he, that there is in human nature a radical, original tendency to evil. Here then the first pre-supposition of the Gospel—the fact so long denied by English, French, and German deists—was, as it were, re-discovered ; not by an orthodox theologian, but by an independent philosopher—one who might justly claim a higher title ; for he was eminently a truthful man. Of all the errors or delusions spread so widely in the eighteenth century, the deadliest and (as wilful) the least pardonable,

was the error most popular—a resolute *suppressio veri*, respecting the corrupted moral state of mankind.

Kant's highest merit was his exposure of this gross delusion. It is not suggested that he accepted Christian doctrine as a whole. Certainly not; but he discovered, through his own sincere inquiry, that the ethical teaching of the Gospel—as a revealed way of salvation—did truly correspond with the actual condition of mankind, and with facts concealed by the men who (in his day) were calling themselves “the friends of the human race.” It was a time of revolutionary teaching; and the doctrine of man's perfect innocence was very popular when Kant published his refutation of the error—say rather, his denial of the falsehood. This denial gave a death-blow to the deistic ethics of the eighteenth century.

The heart of man—his inmost will—said Kant, has been perverted. A rebellion has occurred, and legislative reason is dethroned. Anarchy has been produced by some mysterious cause, of which I can give no account. The motive force that ought to be predominant is suppressed; the sensual nature that should be held in subordination is predominant. This is not a superficial, but a radical evil. And the remedy must be radical. The will of man requires a change that must be called a “regeneration.” But how shall such a change be introduced?—The world demands the energy of a collective moral will, and this moral will must be incorporated, and must have the institutions, and exercise the functions of the Christian Church. Its Head and Founder must be esteemed as an absolute Lawgiver—one who, in God's name, publishes a new moral law, which, in fact, must be a revival of the original law that ought to be contained in our conscience. The ideal must be a Person whom men may behold as an historical example of divine holiness. Truth and goodness embodied must be made clearly manifest; or must be constantly held up, as it were, by the Church, so that the Ideal Man may be seen by men, and may exert an attractive influence over their hearts. That which man has to do in himself and for

himself, must first of all be set forth before him ; and must first be viewed as a work already done for him. [This thought—given with some expansion—is made prominent in the later religious philosophy of Fichte and Hegel.] The true ideal of man as he ought to be—Kant goes on to say—the ideal of pure humanity, “well-pleasing in the sight of God,” must be set forth and fully displayed in the clear portraiture of a Person absolutely good, yet deeply suffering, and in patience bearing all his sorrows—and all for the sake of mankind ; yea, dying, in order to gain for them liberation from the power of evil. This is the most efficacious way of leading humanity back to its first or normal self-destination ; and this—as we have been told—is “to be holy.”

Strange as it must appear, the fact must here be clearly stated, that Kant—here portraying an ideal required by mankind—is not asserting his own historical belief respecting the Person of Christ. By a want of faith in Christ—true God and true man—Kant is led at last to self-contradiction. His ideal theory of the Christian Church, and the work it has to fulfil, can never be made accordant with the arbitrary limitation of his belief respecting the Founder of the Church. On this most important point further remarks may here be postponed. We go on to make complete the analysis of Kant’s religious teaching ; especially his doctrine respecting the primary sanction and the duty of the Christian Church. Its aid, he confesses, is required by mankind. How has this aid been provided ?

How was the Christian Church first established ?—What is the office of the Church ?—What is the end toward which the Church should always be tending ?—In his attempt to answer the first of these questions, Kant’s philosophy leaves him in a serious difficulty—something like that of building without a foundation. He describes the Church as an institution claiming historical authority, yet acting only as *locum tenens* for a better institution—i.e. a school of independent morals. In a word, to the first query Kant gives no historical and objective reply. His subjective reply amounts to this : that the Church has been founded

—how none can tell—in order to give aid in the establishment of good moral principles. Kant once wrote an essay on modern astronomy. If there he had said nothing of Kepler's life and work, the essay would have been something like his theory respecting the Christian Church. The office of the Church, he says, is to teach morals, which have long been too much mingled with matters belonging to history and positive doctrine. Ultimately, these excrescences will be destroyed; the moral conscience, then enlightened—partly through the aid of the Church—will resume its normal autonomy, and that which has long been proclaimed as a revelation will reappear as the result of reason. Here Kant ascribes his own narrow meaning to the text, "When that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away." And next, in order to make clear his intention, the philosopher goes on to say—the integuments required for the sustentation of man's life while existent only in embryo, are cast aside when the man is born. Thus his views of morals lead him to desire a gradual extinction of all religion. To our own ethical reason, he says, rightly belongs autonomy; that is to say, its authority ought to be found *in itself*. It is our moral debility, induced by our habitual sinfulness, that now requires the aid of a Church, proclaiming as the law of God the very same law that ought to be effectually proclaimed by our own conscience. Revelation thus makes sooner, more generally, and more effectually known, that which would be already known by our ethical reason, if it still remained firm in its normal state.

An *invisible* Church, he says, is a collective name for all good men who are striving for a general restoration of moral supremacy, which is already established in their own conscience. But for the guidance of all other men the aid of a *visible* Church is urgently required. Here Kant's notion of revelation substantially agrees with Lessing's idea (p. 72) respecting a gradual and educational revelation of truth—such truth as *might* be discovered by reason.

As regards her ethical principles, the Church must have unity, purity of intention, and unalterable permanence; but as regards ecclesiastical union—a common submission to a moral authority embodied in the Church—every member must be free. In strict theory, the Church should have no traditional or doctrinal institutes, save such as may, in the course of time, and as the results of his own moral education, be made clear to the conscience of every man. These results, he now finds, are identical with the first principles of his own ethical reason. But through the imperfection of human nature, matters non-essential must, in the course of time, become more or less mingled with the primal ethical institutes of the Church. Men at large are not disposed to believe that true morality alone is true religion, and is indeed the sole worship that God can require. So it has come to pass, that the Church still retains—and must probably for some time longer retain—certain statutory definitions, or institutes of doctrine, as well as such ethical laws as are essential—fundamental—eternal. The more all fixed tenets or positive doctrines are made subordinate; the more all dogmas are made subservient to the establishment of true ethics, and the autonomy of conscience—the better will the Church fulfil her duty; and the end to be always kept in view, is a gradual subordination of all history and all positive doctrine to one grand purpose—to establish, as universal and well-known laws of life, the pure morals of Christianity. This is the true coming of the Kingdom of Heaven.

And thus—we add—when the normal ethical condition of mankind is restored, the world will see the end of all religion. Nothing less than this is the result of Kant's theory, as given in his book on "Religion within the bounds of Pure Reason." Its sum and substance is morality—nothing more.

Turning to notice the philosopher's own expositions of several Christian doctrines, we are again led to the same result. For him salvation through a Mediator is simply

equivalent to a sense of moral improvement and liberation from guilt—both attendant on a persevering imitation of Christ's example. The endeavour, we are assured, will be accepted as full and perfect service by One who knows the heart and regards especially our intention. Our obedience must cost us more or less pain, which may be regarded as making some atonement for past transgression. As to the future, we need entertain no fear, while our consciousness of making progress in the way of obedience is attended with a hope of final perseverance. Here it is clear, that our own virtue is made the basis of our faith.

Again we are led to the same conclusion—that morality is the substance of religion—when we come to notice Kant's general rule for the interpretation and practical use of Holy Scripture. Explain the Scriptures freely, he says, and in such a way that you may derive from them a maximum of moral instruction. Even secondary meanings, or those gained by a way of interpretation sometimes called forced, may be allowed, when the result is found useful. The preacher, says Kant, should be less concerned to determine the original sense of a text, than to draw from it something suited to the moral wants of his hearers. Here Kant allows that free kind of exegesis sometimes called accommodation.

It excites no surprise to find, that under the general name "superstitions," Kant practically rejects several ideas and ~~sentiments~~ usually regarded as belonging essentially to religion. Judaism he describes as no religion, but merely an *instrumentum regni*; and heathen religions—ancient and modern—are treated as so many superstitions, almost meaningless. Of religion, as it has existed in all ages of the world's history—excepting perhaps our own—the basis has been, not opinion or doctrine, but a common profound feeling of union with, and dependence upon, the Unknown; and this feeling has been ever attended with some desire—here more or less obscurely, there more or less clearly expressed—to know something of the Unknown—above all, to know

something of the unseen Power or Will by which our own will must be limited, if not altogether controlled. Here, in this desire, is the common ground in which all religions are rooted ; and here, in the desire to know more than our own instincts—natural or moral—can tell us, is the fact by which religion is made distinct from morality. There has always existed in mankind a religious instinct, and it remains when men are fairly well-informed respecting their duties to themselves and to their neighbours. Well-educated men, and those hardly knowing more than the rudiments of morals, are alike interested in the questions to which religion gives answers. They do not go to church, or to chapel, merely to obtain clear knowledge respecting their practical duties ; but to confess their common dependence, to adore where they cannot understand, and to pray for aid while living, and when passing away into an unknown state of existence. Hence the religious instinct is usually most earnest and active in the minds of men, when they are made conscious of approaching death. Least of all can they at that time require instruction respecting their duties in this life. The day of their probation is ending. The relations of all the facts of their past life can now be changed by no will, and by no act on their own part. The last thought, the last word—whatever the life may have been—usually implies some admission of the fact, that there exists in the heart of man a religious instinct, and one that must naturally at some time lead to earnest inquiry. The act of inquiry may indeed be long suppressed by a powerful will ; but in this case the act of suppression is purely wilful, and neither sincere nor satisfactory.

Such religion—so-called—as was most narrowly defined by Kant might indeed suffice for himself ; but for men at large it is simply a negation of religion. For him the church was a lecture-room, where his friend Lilienthal delivered lectures on morals, sometimes interrupted by dogmatic passages that might—as the philosopher held—be better omitted. But of course, Kant, as a man well

instructed in the way of righteousness, seldom attended public worship—say rather moral instruction. He regarded the Church as an institution for the improvement of people, comparatively speaking, uneducated.

To these uneducated people the philosopher had really nothing to give which they would have accepted, had they understood clearly the utter poverty of his theology. To them he had nothing to say of any divine grace ready to aid their weak and imperfect endeavours toward obedience. The notion of such aid, he said, was one of which his practical reason could tell nothing, and one, moreover, that might very easily lead to self-delusion. Prayer he could not for a moment recognize as having any connection with rational religion. In every act of prayer is implied, he says, the absurdity of giving information respecting our wants to One who knows all things. The practice of offering prayer is one of the vestiges of superstition, and should be abolished. Lastly, the same sort of reasoning was applied to the Sacraments of the Lutheran Church.

Such were the dreary results of Kant's theory, so far as religion was concerned. Yet so poverty-stricken was the theology of his day, that its professors were glad to borrow from his admissions some items by which their own teaching might be confirmed. Thus there arose a Kantian School of Supranaturalism, and of course in opposition to that school was soon founded a Kantian School of Rationalism.

The philosopher's admission of "a radical evil" in human nature was connected by Stäudlein and other writers with the conclusion, that the revelation—clearly required—had been given. On the other hand it was contended, that actions, however good, if performed simply in order to please God, could "not be rightly called moral." By several theologians it was suggested, that Christianity, as amended and improved by Kantian criticism, might now be made almost perfect; at least acceptable as an established religion for the future. This modest opinion was especially main-

tained by AMMON, in his work on "Christianity as a Religion for the Future."

On the whole, the success attending these and other attempts to connect Kantian teaching with the Christian Religion was slight and unsatisfactory. Years afterwards, however, another attempt of the kind was made, and now by an English theologian—Prof. MANSEL—in his book on the "Limits of Religious Thought." His doctrine was soon and ably opposed by several theologians—especially by MAURICE, in his book entitled "What is Revelation?" (1859) and by M'COSH, in his work on "Intuitions of the Mind" (1860). The aim of Mansel—to restore the diminished credit of evidences exclusively historical—was to a large extent frustrated by his own endeavours.

It is far easier to give the negative than the positive results of Kant's teaching. First, he destroyed—as many in his day believed—all the bases of the deistic or popular philosophy that for some years had been prevalent. He certainly destroyed its moral basis.

The general aim of deism was—like his own aim—to reduce religion to a code of morals; but something called "Natural Religion" was still tolerated. This, however, contained nothing that could lead to anything noble in morals. Consequently, the rules of conduct that now served as substitutes for morals were hardly more than rules founded on the principle of "self-interest well understood." In plain words, they were so many rules for the convenient practice of selfishness. Everywhere man himself as he is—needing no liberation in his own nature, and of course seeking none—was taught, that he must as soon as possible liberate himself from all "the snares of priestcraft;" that is to say, from all the claims of historical and positive religion. First of all, the man truly "enlightened" must deny the fact of his own moral depravity, and then he must abolish from his memory every idea of a regeneration like that demanded by Christianity.

To satisfy this first demand of "reason," even natural theology must be reduced to a minimum, lower than the belief of Socrates and Plato. For every effect a cause must be supposed; there was therefore left undisturbed the notion of an Omnipotent and Supreme Being—one who in the beginning had created the heavens and the earth, and had then left them as a perfect automaton, to maintain for ever their own undisturbed routine, while men were left destitute of all knowledge of God, save that which might be obtained by their occasional study of themselves and of the created world.

As regards their natural religion—especially their true doctrine, that the wisdom, power, and benevolence of the Creator are displayed in the world around us—Kant, led on by Hume's atheistic notion, was unreasonably severe in his treatment of the popular philosophers. His own utter denial of the proposition, that we may "look through nature up to nature's God," is paradoxical, unscriptural, and unchristian in an eminent degree. In other respects, his criticism—often fair and urgently required—was on the whole most destructive. He went on to say—That the popular philosophy was based upon nothing; that its supposed proofs of the being of God, of moral freedom, and of immortality, were all unsound; and lastly, that the morals called "eudaimonistic," or "utilitarian," were just the opposite of all ethical laws proclaimed—as by the voice of God himself—in the eternal *sanctum* of man's conscience. It is not to be wondered at, if Nicolai and many of his friends spoke partly with derision, partly with terror, of Kant's new criticism. Others, who rejoiced when they saw him going on from victory to victory, bestowed on him a quasi-martial title—"Zermalmer," the "crusher"—a title more befitting Tamerlane, the destructive conqueror of Asia.

Instead of the morals—so-called—which he abolished, Kant endeavoured to establish a code of hard and impracticable laws, belonging essentially, he said, to the

inmost conscience of mankind. These immutable and sublime laws of man's conscience he likens to those of the solar system. The moral law within him was for him no private possession, no peculiarity, but was viewed as a fair copy of the universal law proclaimed in the centre of the moral universe. For him this centre is man's conscience; or, to use his own words, man's "practical reason." Its dictates, we are assured, are as pure, as high, as those commonly recognized as divinely authoritative, because they belong to a revealed religion. When the relationship of this religion with our own conscience is defined, Kant ascribes both priority and autonomy to the latter. The conscience may accept, but should not require, the aid of any faith. Thus man, left utterly unaided—whether by a revelation of God's will, or by any divine grace, or by a hope of any reward—must be ready to obey, when duty demands even the sacrifice of his own life. Thus, for example, he writes of a true patriotic devotion:—"The heroism of the man who sacrifices his life for the welfare of his country may raise some doubts and scruples, even in the midst of our admiration, as long as we do not see clearly that it was his absolute duty so to act. But when we see in an action a sacrifice of apparent honour, or happiness, or life, to the fulfilment of an undoubted duty, the neglect of which would be a violation of divine and human law—when there is no choice save between duty performed at the cost of life, and life preserved by an immoral action, and when the former course is resolutely taken—here there is no scruple, no reserve in our approbation; we say at once, 'It is good;' and we are proud to see that human nature can thus lift itself above all the inclinations and passions of the sensuous world."

Such teaching is in its way sublime; but it has neither the winning gentleness nor the efficacy of Christian teaching. Whence is derived our clear knowledge of the existence and of the sole authority of such a conscience as is here defined?—On what authority do these hard and exclusive

assertions rest?—Kant replies only by saying again and again in effect:—"Conscience is absolute."

So much for abstract theory, or the *beau idéal* of men as they are not; of ethics with which in this world we do not come into contact. This is confessed by the philosopher. The moral evils arising out of the heart of man—pride, concupiscence, envy and hate—make impotent the law that has been called eternal. All these and other sinful passions are collected by Kant under the name of a "radical evil" afflicting the inmost heart of humanity. To quell the evil, the philosopher next invokes the aid of the Christian Religion.

At the same time, he tacitly refuses to admit the divine origin of that religion. Its Founder Himself is allowed to hold only a secondary place in his own Church, which again holds a secondary place, as an *instrumentum regni*, and is to be dismissed when its subsidiary work is done.

Lastly, in his theory of morals and in his treatment of Christianity he has most strongly aided in spreading the error, of all moral errors now the most prevalent—the notion, that a faith, inspired with a divine ardour of love, may die—may pass away and be known no more; and yet its essence, its sum and substance, as expressed in pure ethics may remain. This was the teaching of the philosopher—Immanuel Kant. The ethics he chiefly recommends are, in fact and for the most part, true Christian ethics. They have, in fact, religion for their foundation; yet he claims for them both priority and autonomy; that is to say, an absolute independence with regard to the claims of religion. His bold teaching on this point has been widely followed. Poets of the more thoughtful class—for example Schiller—have found an attractive sublimity in the moral doctrine of Kant, and it has sometimes been expressed in the language of majestic verse. The error of a thinker like Kant must of course be subtle, and demands respectful criticism. At the same time, and in defiance of his authority, these two historical sequences must be distinctly maintained:—The ethics of

Christianity belong to Christianity, and those of deism belong to deism. And between the two there lies a deep gulf. To demonstrate the inevitable nature of these two sequences, nothing more is required than the experience that time must bring; and without that aid the truth may even now be seen, if we are but willing to see it.

"Morals" and "ethics" are two names for a series of results; and where these results have been fixed or made stable, they have been called institutions of society. Without a doubt, men, wherever even a rude society has been established, have found in themselves a capacity of acting in concert for a general aim, and—when aided only by their own associated experience—have risen to a certain level of moral culture. The culture we have at the present day is partly Teutonic, and partly Christian. On each side we have sure results. Our capacity of labour, our greed of wealth, our courage, and our tenacity of purpose—these, and other constituents of a strong natural character, have been derived from our ancestry—not from Christianity. Our religion has a generous nature, and should be defended by an historical argument having a tone of generosity. Let it then be also granted freely, that such hardy virtues as love of national freedom—not of true and individual freedom—martial courage, and general manliness of character once had a home among rude Teutonic tribes dwelling in the central forests of Europe, in the time of undisturbed heathenism; but let it be remembered also that, in all probability, had no Christian revelation appeared among them, those tribes would long ago have destroyed the last vestiges of Roman civilization. Next, in all probability, they themselves would have perished through their own incessant tendency to internecine warfare. The historical grounds of this supposition must be noticed in another place. They are here only briefly referred to, in order to indicate one of the errors most prevalent in the time of Kant: a neglect or slight notice of the lessons taught by history—an error too noticeable in many deistic

and humanitarian theorists of his time, and especially noticeable in Kant himself, a man of clear intellect and high morality. His belief in God; his regard for the dictates of inviolable justice; his hope of immortality—all were derived from the Christian instruction imparted to him in the days of his childhood.

An alliance of independent morality with religion is proposed in Kant's theory; while he regards expediency as a motive strong enough to make the alliance permanent. In his time it was hardly doubted that in substance religion and morality are altogether one and the same. The substance of religion consists—it is supposed—in certain moral precepts, such as ought to be known and may be practised without the aid of revelation and faith. Such aid—for a time required by an abnormal state of our conscience—must be regarded only as a temporary expedient. As soon as true morality is established, the service of religion will be ended. All this is equivalent to an assertion that man's normal condition should be one of moral independence. It follows that when our moral training in the preparatory school of religion has been received, in the form or under the name of a revelation, there will follow a time when the man will "put away childish things;" that is to say, all notions essentially religious—our sense of dependence on God's mercy, our duty of submission, our belief in the aid of divine grace, with every thought that can lead to prayer—all must be abolished. At the same time it is presumed that pure ethical ideas, once made known to us, as if by revelation, will still remain ever permanent in the conscience of man. The building will remain firm, while the old basis is being removed, and a new foundation will in the meantime be safely laid.

This is an experiment suggested as reasonable by Kant, and by other independent moralists. The value of their suggestion must be tested by means of fair and studious reference to the facts recorded in history. When and where, we must ask, have such pure morals as those called Christian

ever existed without a basis in some authority firmer than human reason? Authority is justly claimed by statutory laws, and by legal precedents, by teachers, and by judges; especially by statesmen as representatives of venerable political institutions; and in all ordinary and peaceful times, reference to such authority may suffice to preserve social order. But it should never be forgotten that, in order to be firm, all finite and secular claims of authority over men must be defined as subordinate to eternal first principles. When the very first principles of humanity and society are called in question; when the primitive authority of government is discussed—as it must be by a free people—where will any sure basis or ultimate resting-place be found, if the authority of religion be destroyed? All that is said here respecting social and political institutions will apply with still greater force to the moral laws—those laws founded on feelings less definite but more powerful than written statutes—the laws that must govern first the individual man, then the family, the corporation, and the state.

The notion that true morals have for any considerable time existed, or that they can exist without union with a religious sanction, is a gross error, though one that has often been made plausible and to a considerable extent—has been supported by the teaching of such a philosopher as Kant. The system of man's rational and moral autonomy to which he would lead us, is one that has never been tried in practice, indeed it is one that has never yet been clearly expounded, even as a theory. It remains to this day—as a theory—intensely entangled more or less with ethical vestiges of Christian teaching.

A new creed or system of notions—say either deism or Kantian ethics—cannot be suddenly made a substitute for a creed or a doctrine once firmly or historically established. The old must inevitably be confused more or less with the new. Deism, and even atheism itself, will accept aid from the religion it decried. The compound so made does not fairly, and for a long time to come cannot, represent any moral belief

held by Socrates, by Plato, by Aristotle, or by Seneca. The morality of modern deism is in fact a syncretism—a mixture of the old with the new—“made up” (so to speak) by men who for the most part have been educated as Christians. Consequently, they have connected, in a mechanical way—that is to say by a mere “putting together”—the morals, and even certain sentiments vitally belonging to their old belief, with cold and bare abstractions belonging to their new system, and grounded, as they say, on their independent reason.

Hence has arisen a deceptive confusion of ideas. It is mostly taken for granted that certain rudiments of morals—such as are a bare *sine quâ non* of society—may exist among men hardly otherwise made distinct from other animals. So far law or incipient morality may exist, it is presumed, without the aid of religion. But that Christian morals can still remain practical, when separated from the faith that hitherto has given them life and strength—this is an unhistorical notion, however widely it may now be spread abroad.

It is therefore important to notice how this false notion has been supported by able writers—by Kant; also by Fichte in his earlier teaching; but especially by Carlyle. It may seem bold to oppose a thesis maintained by such authorities; for their thesis has been made a dogma; and their philosophy will not allow an opponent to refer either to Holy Scripture, or to the writings of any men who might be regarded as Christian apologists.

We have here to encounter first the judgment of Kant—an author usually called a hard thinker. It may therefore be proper in this place to refer to the judgment of another metaphysician—one who in close sequence of thought was certainly not inferior, while as regards comprehensive historical knowledge, he was far in advance of Kant. In opposition to Kant's doctrine of absolute or independent morality, his philosophical successor, Hegel, defines religion as the essential basis of morality. True

freedom—the first condition of a moral life—is, he tells us, founded on religion; and more definitely he next asserts that the only possible basis of freedom must be found in the Christian Religion.

“It is in the Christian religion alone that the basis of a general and progressive freedom is found. The law of an external liberation of slaves is derived from the Authority who also demands that our internal liberation should be realized; and the two laws can never be separated. Moral liberation and political freedom must advance together. The process must demand some vast space of time for its full realization; but it is the law of the world’s progress. The history of the world is a record of endeavours to realize the idea of freedom, and of progress surely made, but not without many intervals of apparent failure and retrogression. Among modern failures the French Revolution of the eighteenth century was the most remarkable. It was an endeavour to realize a boundless external liberation without the indispensable condition of moral freedom. Abstract notions based merely on the understanding, and having no power to control the natural will of man, assumed the functions of morality and religion, and so led to the dissolution of society and to the social and political difficulties in the midst of which we are now labouring.”

Hegel spoke (in 1830) of a time coming when Atomism would prevail in politics, as once in physical science, and men would “put down a government, simply because it was a government.” In the concluding sections of his “Encyclopædia” (1st edition, 1817), he speaks still more distinctly, if possible, of the indissoluble union of true morals and religion with free and firm political institutions. “Morality,” he says, “is the substance of the State; or, in other words, the State is the development and affirmation of the people’s united moral will; but religion is the substance of both moral and political life. The State is founded on the moral character of the people, and their morality is founded on their religion. Laws are accepted as just and right, so

far as they are generally felt and known to be the practical dictates of a true religion. By an inquiry into the bases of morals we are thus led back to religion, and, with regard to the education of the individual, it is true that he can be led only through ethics to a true knowledge of the divine character. There is no other way that leads to a true religion; and thus it might appear that morals should be described as the basis of religion. But this is true only with respect to the sequence that takes place in our training. The basis of the laws to which men submit must exist prior to all the laws that are founded upon it. It is the root from which they spring, or the underlying substance of their existence. Apart from all metaphysical discussions on the relations of religion and morals, the truth remains, that they must ever be viewed as inseparable. There cannot be two consciences in a man, one for practical and another for religious interests. Accordingly as he deeply and sincerely believes, so he will act. Religion must be the basis of morals, and morality must be the foundation of a State.

“It is the monstrous error of our times to wish to regard these inseparables [religion, morals, and politics] as if they were separable, one from the others; yea, as if they were even indifferent to one another. Accordingly, the relation of religion with the State is viewed as if the latter, first of all, had an independent existence in itself, by virtue of some power and authority not derived from religion—as if the religious element might be viewed apart, either as a subjective disposition of individuals, inducing them to yield obedience to the State, or as an indifferent matter, or, at best, as something merely desirable as an aid in supporting the State's authority. This separatist doctrine implies, in short, the assumption that the State's whole moral system, including its constitution and its laws, as founded on reason, can stand of itself and on its own ground, apart from all religious sanctions.”

The error here described as "a monstrous error" is, in fact, the fundamental principle on which Kant has based his theory—that morality is independent, and accepts only as an expedient the aid of religion.

Kant's philosophy consists of two parts—one intellectual, the other moral. Between them there lies a deep gulf. Here is a hopeless dualism, disappointing us where we are seeking for a union or harmony of ideas. The master teaches in two separate schools—one for intellectual, the other for moral philosophy—and what he says in his first course of lectures, he contradicts in the second. In the first, he leads us to scepticism. We have, he says, general notions that are easily conceivable, and as such are readily accepted by a vast majority of mankind—for example, the notion that God created the world—nay, it may be shown that among these notions some are inevitable—they *must* be entertained ; yet they still leave us without any assurance of their "objective character." All that we can say truly of them is this :—our reasonings, when not duly limited, must lead to such conclusions. But they are merely *our* conclusions—at once inevitable and destitute of a sure basis. The result is of course scepticism.

Kant nevertheless assures us that we may escape from all scepticism when we enter the world of ethics ; for this is a world that may be called *our own*. Here we have not to inquire, as before, Do the realities of the world of sense agree with our notions ? All such thoughts are dismissed. The truth, the authority, of moral ideas—intuitively known—now gives validity even to *our own* laws of reasoning. [Here is an example of "dualism."] Here, he says, we *may* apply our law of causality, to confirm our belief in the existence of God. Our sure idea of justice demands a final award respecting all actions, whether good or evil. This award God alone—as One omniscient, perfectly just, and omnipotent—can truly determine. Therefore, as truly as justice exists, so surely must we hold that a final and

just award will be made; and so surely must we also believe that God will finally "render unto every man according to his works."

The doctrine thus given, with some show of reasoning, amounts to little more than Bishop Butler's teaching, which has already been briefly noticed (p. 33). Among all our ideas, says Butler, we have to notice—in speaking of ethics—only those which have this one characteristic—they claim for themselves a pre-eminence called moral—in other words, they assert themselves as ideas having authority. This fact leads Butler and Kant to consider next the claims of morals, as leading on to a consideration of the claims of religion. Here their views differ widely. Butler contends that, in concord with the analogy of divine government, the revelation required has been granted to mankind. The religious views of Kant have already been analysed, and have been described as leading to no sure basis of historical belief. He leaves at last unanswered such questions as these:—Is the religion, morally recommended, to be held as historically true? Granted that of all aids and encouragements for the maintenance of a holy life, none can be so efficient, none can afford such clear moral guidance, as the presence of an Ideal, like that set before us in Kant's theory—we are still compelled to ask: is that Ideal—morally perfect—also real, or historically true? To whom, in the last instance, is obedience to be yielded? To the voice of an eternal moral law, speaking within our conscience? It has been from the first decided by Kant, that the authority of conscience ought to be absolute; but the authority so established in theory has been shown to be weak and defective in practice. Accordingly, the aid of the Church has been invoked by our consciousness of a defect in moral strength. We are not, then, practically sure that we may now be solely and safely guided by an independent conscience. Its normal and authoritative voice is too often silent. If, then, we must turn to the Church for aid, must we not first ask, Whence has the Church her authority? To this last question Kant

gives no sure historical reply. Had the question been personally addressed to him, he would most probably have referred simply to the dictates of conscience, in the first place, and next to the authority of the State.

Kant himself acted in a way consistent with his own doctrine. He knew well all that could be said about morality; and as this was the sum and substance of religion—as he supposed—he seldom attended the services of the Church. He maintained however that, by the majority of men, the moral aid that forms of worship and ecclesiastical ordinances might render should not be neglected. Of public worship, regarded as an expression of dependence, faith, thankfulness, and adoration—in a word, as a service of both heart and mind, and one alike due from all men, whether ignorant or philosophical—his views were very narrow. It should nevertheless be added, that from such irreverence as was common among his rationalistic contemporaries, his own mind was free. There were among his injudicious admirers some who ranked the authority of his teaching with that of the Gospel itself. They even went so far as to speak of him as a moral teacher greater than Christ. Nothing said by the philosopher himself gave any countenance to that gross error.

CHAPTER VIII.

FICHTE'S RELIGIOUS PHILOSOPHY.

KANT left remaining some grounds for doubt respecting the independence of morality. To assert this independence was, nevertheless, the main purpose of all his moral teaching. It was soon brought to a climax in the early teaching of FICHTE—the boldest of Kant's disciples—who in his first ethical system asserted the autonomy of conscience. The idea of moral order, which man—unaided by any revelation—can find in himself, and can develop as an universal and authoritative law of life—this idea is itself the only light, guide, and religion that humanity can require. Here is all that has ever been true in any religion. The idea of moral order—constantly unfolding itself, and making all obstacles subservient to its final victory over the universe—this is, said Fichte, our own idea, and is indeed our self-assertion; at the same time it is our only rational idea of God. Moral order includes all the acts belonging to the life that has been called divine; and this life is *ours*. It is *our* assertion of *our own true life*. And not only have we the very source of this life in ourselves; it is also true, that we ourselves create all the materials—so-called—by which our moral life is sustained and developed. There can be no victory without a foregoing opposition. There can be no development of our strength without work in overcoming obstacles which we set in opposition to our own will. Consequently, as a means of our moral education, there must be placed before us obstructions destined to be removed out of our way; there must then exist a universe *setting itself*—

apparently—in opposition to our moral will; that is to say, asserting itself—apparently—as a universe in warfare against ourselves.

Whence comes that hostile world? Whence comes the war and fighting of man against the universe of opposition displayed all around us? From ourselves.

Yea; the warfare comes from our own will—so says this Titanic philosopher—it has been all created by our will, and now must be perpetuated by our will, as a war “never ending, still beginning.”

New oppositions must be created by the same power—our will—but only in order that they may ever be overcome; and so the process must go on *ad infinitum*. Morality is a never-ceasing act. Rest, if possible, could be no reward, but would be a cessation of the act in which our life consists.

These few assertions represent the practical doctrine of Fichte's first philosophy, which several of his contemporaries denounced as a system equivalent to atheism. To defend his doctrine of ethics, he had already established in his own mind the principles of a new system of metaphysics. The sum and substance of all that is asserted in this new system was found in a few lines once written by Kant, and printed in 1781. That substance, said Fichte, which my predecessor has called “unknown,” is truly—as he himself has indeed suggested—identical with the thinking substance—say rather activity—which in myself and in every man, when he is speaking of himself, asserts itself as *ego*. All the phenomena of this world, that we find spread forth around us, says Fichte, have their common basis in this one permanent activity, calling itself in every one of us *ego*. Now the *ego*—though essentially intelligent—cannot *know* itself, unless it be first placed in opposition to a world that collectively may be called *non-ego*. He next proceeds to show, that the activity which he calls *ego* is creative. All the phenomena we behold have been produced by our own act. It is with reference chiefly to this assertion made in

his earlier system of philosophy, that the term "egotistic" (p. 144) has been applied to Fichte.

This bold new teaching in metaphysics, is in fact a continuation of Kant's first "Critique." There the author—starting from the teaching of Hume—had left as a something unknown the substance of all phenomena, and consequently had defined his own system as a classification of our subjective laws of thought. Of their objective validity—of their truth as representing the reality of the world that lies beyond ourselves—he can give us no assurance. Appearances are all that we can know as existing, not in ourselves, but in that world beyond us. Unknown to us there must be supposed—so our reason compels us to say—as remaining behind or beneath all those phenomena, one permanent being which we call substance; further than this we can say nothing of it. Our raw materials of knowledge are supplied by the outward world, and are classified or placed in order by our understanding. So that Hume's negation does not destroy the "subjective" validity of our reasonings, but merely shows us that they can relate only to appearances. We cannot know what things are in themselves; for, first of all, appearances are viewed as existing in space or in time, which are forms of our own thought; and secondly, we can view appearances only as they are classified by our own rules. We thus accept them indeed; yet not simply, or as they are given by the senses. While we are accepting them, as conveyed by our sensations, we are also employed in stamping upon them—so to speak—the patterns supplied by our own understanding. To the details of the general theory—thus merely indicated—Kant in the first edition of the "Critique" (1781) added a noticeable suggestion:—

"It is not impossible," said he, "that the thing unknown, which we call substance, may be identical with the thinking substance that in every man asserts itself as *ego*, when he is speaking of himself."—In the second edition of the same book, he struck out this suggestive remark. It was not

forgotten, however, but was seized by his disciple Fichte ; and was soon made a basis for a new system of metaphysics. Of this system, and of the ethical teaching that followed it, our account may be brief ; for Fichte himself did not long remain faithful to the principle of his earlier teaching. It does not require a word to show that the principle of man's absolute autonomy can lead to no religion. If any worship could be based on such a principle, it would be an adoration of ourselves. The causes that led Fichte to renounce his first philosophy will be better understood when some account of his life has been given.

JOHANN GOTTLIEB FICHTE, the son of parents whose position was lowly, was born in 1762 at Rammenau, a village in Upper Lusatia. Through the kindness of a nobleman, he received an early classical education at Pforta. The grammar-school there was one that had been endowed out of the revenues of suppressed convents. Some time afterwards, young Fichte entered the University of Jena, where he studied Spinoza's philosophy. Later, he was for several years engaged as a private tutor ; and meanwhile was a diligent student of Kant's philosophy. The first noticeable result of his studies was that, in 1792, he published anonymously an essay on the idea of revelation which—as he maintained—might reasonably be accepted as consistent with the ethical teaching of Kant. The reputation acquired by this essay—at first regarded as having been written by Kant himself—was one of the causes leading to Fichte's appointment (1793) as Professor of Philosophy at Jena. Here in later years he was associated with several eminent men, including Goethe and Schiller, the brothers Schlegel, Wilhelm von Humboldt, and others. Jena at this time was rising in importance, and was regarded as the birth-place of new ideas in literature and philosophy. About the beginning of the nineteenth century, Weimar, though still famous as the residence of Wieland, Herder, Goethe, and Schiller, was surpassed in intellectual activity and innovation by its neighbour, the seat of learning on the

Saale. The University had been greatly improved by the liberal measures of Karl August and his minister Goethe. Literature was represented at Jena by such men as the brothers Schlegel, Tieck, and Novalis, and philosophy by Reinhold, Fichte, Steffens, and Hegel. Literary society lost dignity, but gained energy and freedom, when Jena was made the centre. The meetings of poetical and philosophical men which took place here (in the elder Schlegel's house) were genial, and included some amusing contrasts of character. There might often be seen Fichte—a short, sturdy figure, with hair flowing on his shoulders—speaking imperiously, but often in urgent need of pecuniary aid, and sometimes dressed almost too meanly even for a philosopher. Among other philosophers then assembled at Jena, there sometimes appeared a young man with luminous eyes, a round head, and a projecting brow. This was Schelling, who had already published several essays containing the outlines of a new philosophy of nature. For its development he was partly indebted to the bold suggestions of Fichte's own theory.

The chief work in which this theory was expounded as a system—boldly entitled a “*Doctrine of Science*”—was published in 1794; it was followed in 1796 by a book entitled “*Principles of Natural Law*,” and in 1798 by a treatise on “*Ethics*.” Meanwhile Fichte was engaged as editor of a philosophical journal, in which was published (1798) an article—not written by the editor—of which the tendency was regarded as atheistic. The censure and controversy that followed its publication led Fichte to resign his professorship at Jena. Soon afterwards he went to reside at Berlin, where he was numbered with the friends of Friedrich Schlegel and Schleiermacher, and was occasionally engaged as a lecturer. In 1805 he was appointed Professor of Philosophy at Erlangen; but was allowed every winter to return to Berlin, there to continue his courses of public lectures. Of these the most celebrated—his “*Addresses to*

the German Nation"—were delivered in the winter of 1807-8, when his voice was sometimes drowned by the drums of the French troops marching near the lecture-hall. Some passages in these lectures have been criticized and called hyperbolical—those chiefly where the speaker declares that if the German people fail in this crisis, the whole civilized world must perish. Most probably, Fichte—addressing immediately only the people of Prussia—had within the range of his mental vision all the European nations of Teutonic origin; and in that case his exaggeration may surely be pardoned, when the political circumstances of the time are remembered.

In 1806 Jena had fallen, and in the following year the peace of Tilsit left Germany in political circumstances of utter degradation. There was left existing no true national life. A disunion represented by envious local interests had been an institution in Germany for two centuries. The French were fighting to extend a mechanical despotism; but they had a union, though one of the least durable character; and they were, of course, for a time victorious over an aggregate of factions. The "house divided against itself" fell. It was in accordance with the law that governs the world. Prussia had lost half its territory; a third part of Germany was reduced to a state of vassalage; the slavery of the Rheinbund was made more oppressive than ever, and the great minister, Vom Stein, who had at heart grand projects for the deliverance of the nation, was dismissed from office. Napoleon I, in 1807, ruled virtually over all Europe, excepting England and Turkey. His despotism was as minute as it was extensive. Amid all his plans for the degradation of Germany, he could find time to wage petty warfare. Palm, a bookseller at Nürnberg, had in his shop a few patriotic pamphlets, and though he had not sold a copy, he was shot in obedience to orders received directly from the emperor. "I presume," said Napoleon, writing to his agent, "you have arrested the booksellers at Augsburg

and Nürnberg. It is my will that they should be tried by a court-martial and shot, and within the space of twenty-four hours."

Such political circumstances might have served, one would say, to arouse the men who were still writing poetry, or speculating in philosophy; but, in another point of view, the despair of their times might possibly be excused as something inevitable. However that may be, there was in Fichte a spirit too noble to confess, as Goethe once did—with reference to the great conqueror—"the man is too strong for us." On the contrary, in 1807-8 Fichte thus appealed to the heart of the nation:—

"Germans! the voices of your ancestors are sounding from the earliest ages—the men who destroyed Rome's despotism, the heroes who gave their lives to preserve inviolate these mountains, plains, and rivers which *you* allow a foreign despot to claim—these men, your forefathers, cry out to you: 'If you reverence your origin, preserve sacred your rights by maintaining our patriotic devotion.' And with this admonition from antiquity there are mingled the voices of patriots of a later age. The men who contended for religious freedom exhort you to carry out their conflict to its ultimate results. And posterity, still unborn, has claims upon you. Your descendants must be involved in disgrace if you fail in your duty. Will you make yourselves bad links in the national chain which ought to unite your remotest posterity to that noble ancestry of which you profess to be proud? Shall your descendants be tempted to employ falsehood, in order to hide their disgrace of ancestry? Must they say to some future inquirer—'No, no; we are not descendants from those people so shamefully beaten in 1806 and the following years. We do not belong to that race.'"

Another passage in the same address is remarkable. The speaker regards himself and his audience as forming but a small contingent in an army of which the hosts, though invisible, are present. He thus proceeds:—"Yea; and all the spirits of the wise and the good—in all the past

generations of mankind—are uniting their supplications with mine. They are now lifting up their hands in prayer and—present, though unseen—are imploring you now to be true, and in the fulfilment of your duty to fulfil all their most ardent aspirations toward freedom. Yea, more; for may I not say even that the Divine plan of Providence is waiting for your co-operation? Shall all who have believed in the progress of society and the possibility of just government among men be scouted as silly dreamers? Shall all the dull souls who only awake from a sleepy life, like that of plants and animals, to direct their scorn against every noble purpose, be triumphant in their mockery? You must answer these questions by your own practical career.

“The old Roman world, with all its grandeur and glory, fell under the burthen of its own unworthiness and the power of our forefathers. And if my reasoning has been correct, you, the descendants of those heroes who triumphed over corrupted Rome, are now the people to whose care the interests of humanity are confided. The hopes of humanity for deliverance out of the depths of evil depend upon you! If you fall, humanity falls with you. Do not flatter yourselves with a vain consolation, imagining that future events, if not better, will be not worse than those of past ages. If the modern civilized world should sink, like old Rome, into corruption, you may suppose that some half-barbarian but energetic race, like the old Teutonic race, may arise and establish a new order of society on the ruins of the old. But where will you find such a people now? The surface of the earth has been explored. Every nation is known. Is there any half-barbarous race now existing and prepared to do the work of restoration as our ancestors did it? If you—the centre of modern civilized society—fall into slavery and moral corruption, then humanity must fall with you—and without hope of restoration.”

The conclusion of this lecture reminds an English reader of a discourse delivered (1803) by the eloquent preacher, Robert Hall, of Cambridge. It is entitled “Sentiments

proper to the Present Crisis," and contains the following passage:—"Freedom, driven from every spot on the continent, has sought an asylum in a country which she always chose for her favourite abode; but she is pursued even here, and threatened with destruction. The inundation of lawless power, after covering the whole earth, threatens to follow us here; and we are most exactly, most critically placed, in the only aperture where it can be successfully repelled—in the Thermopylæ of the universe. As far as the interests of freedom are concerned—the most important by far of sublunary interests—you, my countrymen, stand in the capacity of the federal representatives of the human race; for with you it is to determine (under God) in what condition the latest posterity shall be born; their fortunes are entrusted to your care, and on your conduct at this moment depends the colour and complexion of their destiny. If liberty, after being extinguished on the continent, is suffered to expire here, whence is it ever to emerge in the midst of that thick night that will invest it? It remains for you, then, to decide whether freedom shall yet survive—or be covered with a funeral pall, and wrapt in eternal gloom."

It was during the time of his residence in Berlin—especially in the years 1806-13, when he so greatly aided the movement leading to the War of Liberation—that an important change of a religious nature took place in Fichte's own views and feelings. Some indications of a tendency toward such a change might be seen in his earlier writings; but on the whole he had hitherto maintained his own stern morals as a substitute for religion. Now, when he felt that the world at large required a motive stronger than any cold and hard law of conscience could afford, he was at the same time made aware of the main defect in his early philosophy. It is not implied that in his later years he was led at once—or even ultimately—to accept Christianity, in any complete or orthodox sense of the word; but he was now led first to admit that religion was a reality, distinct from morals,

however pure. This admission soon led to another more definite—to a belief that through Christ alone man is made capable of his highest spiritual development. Lastly, he was led to assert a principle of higher practical importance than the whole series of philosophical systems, both ancient and modern—to assert in substance the principle, that for mankind at large Christian freedom is the only freedom possible. On account of his new promulgation of this truth—long forgotten, or left in silence, even by millions of men called Christians—Fichte must be esteemed as the first among German philosophers who led speculation back toward religion—or, to say the least, to the recognition of a truth that even Christian teachers have seldom asserted with sufficient courage.

Freedom, now, as before, Fichte declared, is the true destination of man; but it is and must be, he adds, first a moral and spiritual, then a practical and social freedom—a liberation at once from our sinfulness and from our thralldom. To this full enjoyment of liberty mankind can be led by Christ; but they can be led in no other way. On this point the sum of his doctrine has been tersely given in these few lines of verse:—

“The sensual and the dark rebel in vain—
Slaves by their own compulsion—in mad game
They snap their manacles, and wear the name
Of ‘freedom’ graven upon a heavier chain.”

The change that had taken place in Fichte's views respecting the claims of religion was expressed boldly in his course of lectures on the “Characteristics of the Age,” *i.e.*, of his own times. The traits he chiefly censured—sciolism, conceit, and cynicism—had previously been ascribed to the educated and unbelieving people of Berlin. Before the days of Fichte they had been thus described by Oetinger—a mystic pietist, in some respects not unlike Hamann:—

“The men of Berlin have been made giddy by their philosophy, which has led them to believe in nothing higher than a mechanical first cause of all things.

Consequently, they know nothing of God ; nothing of man as capable of religion ; nothing of angels or of fiends ; nothing of sin, and accordingly nothing of grace ; nothing of either heaven or hell. . . . But Christ will one day compel them to see what it is thus to be ashamed of Him before men, and to speak of Him as they have spoken."

Lessing had described Berlin as a school for the culture of ribaldry ; and now Fichte—referring chiefly to the tone of society in Berlin—described his own age as one pre-eminent in its wickedness.

"Yours," said he, "is a generation that has denied the very possibility of any authority. That idea, among other prejudices, you have scouted ; you have made your minds clear of all superstition ; and what is there left in you ? Nothing—unless you call your freethinking a positive something. And what is your freethinking ? An incessant babbling about negations, which you have been repeating now so long, that all the world is weary of them. We now know thoroughly all the results of your philosophy. You cannot speak a word that will be new to us ; we have heard it all, again and again ; and we know that there is nothing in it. . . . Now then you have done your worst ; and what have you done ?—Have you banished from the minds of men all thought of the Eternal One ?—from your own minds ? Possibly ; but *here* it is still—the ever-abiding idea of the Eternal—abiding still with us, in our heart of hearts. And you will not destroy it. Since the time when your philosophy began—and almost as soon ended all it had to say—we have had better doctrine—the manlier teaching of Kant. He has taught us that something remains firm, after all your negation of religious truth. He has taught us to recognize, with reverence and obedience, the authority of one power that will not vanish at your bidding ; the authority of that voice in our own inmost conscience, which declares to man the absolute law—let him think what he will of it—thou shalt do this ; or thou shalt do that. You will not put down that law. Many a soul has found firm

support and strength in submission to that authority. Yet we grant it is stern. It has still left in us an earnest desire to know more; nay, it has served to excite this desire. Those men most earnest in their obedience to the imperative moral law of their own conscience are also the men most earnest in desiring the aid—the strength and consolation—of religion. In a word, true morals must lead to devotion; this is a sequence not to be prevented by all the sciolism of these times. Your philosophy must pass away, and make way for a philosophy of religion.”

Fichte next goes on to make clear the difference existing between morals and religion. This part of his teaching is admirable, and has largely aided in setting aside Kant's narrow ideas respecting first the claims of religion, in a general sense, and next, those of the Christian Religion.

The basis of theories of religion now accepted as true by many inquirers is found in the *later* teaching of Fichte—especially in his several courses of lectures delivered in Berlin. It is worth notice, that at the very moment when the lecturer was describing Berlin as the grand centre of unbelief in his time, it was being made by his own teaching the centre of a new movement of which the result has been—to say the least—a restoration of respect for the idea of religion. Schleiermacher, Schelling, Hegel, Dörner, Biedermann, Pfleiderer, and Lipsius—these are but a few among the names of many writers on the theory or philosophy of religion. They hold of course their various views on many minor questions; but as regards the basis—the idea of religion, belonging essentially to the mind of man—and as regards the restoration, the revival, of this idea, at such a time as the beginning of our century, they all refer, with profound respect and gratitude, to the important services of Fichte. The man whom hard, systematic thinking had led to a position that, as commonly understood, was called atheism, was now led by his own conscience—awakened and expanded by the great movement of the age—to a recognition of religious authority. Of course, this change

in his views, as defined by the negative men of Berlin, was called "a transition from philosophy to mysticism." "There was no logic in it," they said; "for all the account to be given of Fichte's new doctrine, was to state the fact, that he was now a diligent student of St. John's Gospel." The self-sufficient men of Nicolai's school—while saying much here and there of their own sole "rational creed"—had destroyed the root-idea of religion; and in morals had left remaining no basis as firm as that found existent even among some tribes called savages.

On the other hand, too many so-called apologists of Christianity had endeavoured to recommend their own narrow interpretation of their creed by misrepresentation of every other religion; and so efficacious had been their special pleading, that even intelligent men were led into a similar bigotry. Thus Kant—as we have said—could find no religion at all in Judaism, and dismissed contemptuously, as so many foolish or empty superstitions, all the religions of the heathen world, ancient and modern.

How could such narrow bigotry give aid to faith, or strengthen a true argument—one based upon St. Paul's own principles—in favour of Christianity? Our religion is at once too great and strong, as well as too gentle, to look down with contempt upon any form in which has ever been expressed our common sentiment of aspiration toward God—that sentiment which especially distinguishes man from the lower animals.

To deny the very existence of the sentiment—to treat Christianity as one among many fictions called "religions," and all equally false—to represent that the end of man's being is to make himself independent or autocratic, as an "intellectual all in all"—here is the philosophy of atheism, hardly ever more boldly preached than in our own scientific age. Can there be entertained a reasonable fear, lest evil results should soon follow the preaching of atheistic philosophy? Can such preaching now—near the close of the nineteenth century—be attended with any considerable

success? These questions are large and difficult; and it is but judicious to defer for a time every unqualified reply. Yet it may be submitted, that there are serious grounds—both moral and historical—for the suggestion, that such fears may be reasonably entertained. The absence of fear, expressed by many with regard to the spread of irreligion, indicates nothing more than their own fixed belief—that Christian morality of the purest type can live on, can guide the individual man, and can safely take charge of all the interests of society, when everything called “religion” is swept away, or numbered with other antiquities. This is our latest and most plausible creed of moral atheism. As we have seen, it can find apparent support in Kant’s earlier ethical doctrine—that of his “Critique of Practical Reason”—and in the earlier philosophy of Fichte. It remains to be seen what is the teaching of Fichte in his later philosophy—that which has been called “mysticism.” Thus then, in the first place, he asserts that religion and ethics, though closely united, must still be regarded as clearly distinct in character.

Religion, says Fichte, is the soul of morality. Moral laws are manifold, and obedience is too often irksome. In religion obedience is freedom; for love expels not fear alone, but also every thought of such service as might be rendered in a state of bondage. Bound only by the love of God, we enjoy perfect freedom. The pain of self-conquest, or even of self-sacrifice, is transmuted into joy. There remains in us no thought of self as existent in separation from One who now is All in All.

Yet our real life, with its course of duties—domestic, social, and political—is not absorbed in a mystic quietism. We are still engaged as before with the realities of this life, and these may be viewed as supplying the scenery and incidents of our journey through life. It is religion that sheds all along our way a cheering light, and breathes into our heart a vital warmth. Life—love—religion—these three are one. Tell me, says Fichte, what you love

supremely; and I will tell you—not the accidents of your life, but—what is your own inmost life, your moral character, and your destiny.

Our philosophy and our morality must lead us at last to one thought—the idea of God. In the presence of this idea every other thought is as it were made obsolete, though not destroyed. Death must attend life, and growth supposes decay; so in proportion as the idea of God expands itself in us, our feeble ideas of our own finite selves, and of all things existing in the world around us, must alike fade away. [Here as in other passages Fichte uses terms that may be called pantheistic; but his aim is devotional, not metaphysical.]

Our first view of the world, he goes on to say, is that which we call natural and materialistic. These phenomena we see around us are realities for us. We rise to a higher point of view when the world itself is regarded chiefly as a school where our moral education is to be completed. But there is yet a higher point of view—that which I call religious—and beheld from this point, the world itself is but a thin veil; our very self is but another thin veil: we draw them both aside—and God reveals himself.

So far it might appear, as if Fichte claimed for himself an immediate insight, or one not requiring the aid of any historical revelation; but this is not his intention. He proceeds to speak more definitely of divine revelation, and especially of the Kingdom of Heaven as first founded and proclaimed by Christ.

In our true life—the life I have called religious—we are to be made inhabitants of a new world—the Kingdom of Heaven—where, under the reign of God, we are to live in the enjoyment of perfect freedom—even the “liberty of the sons of God.” The capacity to participate in that life is ours; but ours is not the power either to claim as our birthright, or to impart to others, that freedom—that union with God. To be imparted, it must first of all be possessed, maintained by One who can call it his own. Not as an ideal; not as a lofty aim—such as we ourselves may have,

and still know that it is impracticable—not thus did this divine freedom exist in Christ. No; it belonged as his birthright to Jesus of Nazareth; and until time expires, all who enter into the Kingdom must come unto God by him; and until the end of time, all who truly know themselves in their relation to him, will bow down with profound reverence, to acknowledge the incomparable glory of his manifestation. In his life Heaven is opened, and by him has been proclaimed for all mankind the freedom of the reign of God.

His own Person, his manifestation—real and historical—is the one great miracle to be believed, and the lapse of time only serves to confirm the everlasting miracle, that in all who come unto God through him, a new heart is created.

Thus then, says Fichte, the Kingdom of Heaven is established, not as a metaphysical ideal, but at once as an historical fact and as a divine authoritative idea, that must ever expand itself more and more in the earth, until “the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdom of God and of his Christ.” This is in substance the teaching of Fichte, in the fourth volume of his “*Staatslehre*.” He there goes on to add some remarks—not unlike Herder’s already quoted—to the effect that, though the very name of Christ be forgotten, his will must be fulfilled in the world. The writer next goes on to ascribe a narrow meaning to St. Paul’s doctrine of the atonement.

Still—after these and other subjective qualifications of his own confession have been considered—it is clear that Fichte here comes near to the central truth of Christianity; nearer than any point attained by Lessing, by Jacobi, by Kant, or by Herder in the later years of his life. Making allowance for occasional aberrations—it may be safely affirmed as true, that in the years 1781-1831—beginning with Lessing’s decease, and ending with the close of Hegel’s career—the course of philosophical thought described a curve more or less swiftly approximative and generally moving on toward that centre. At last, the truth—that in Christ God manifested Himself in indissoluble union with

human nature—was pronounced by Hegel. The passage in which this assertion is given has been omitted in certain analyses of his religious philosophy.

It may be asked, how was Fichte led to so great a change in his belief? The change will seem less surprising when it is considered that, even in his first philosophy, his idea of the Absolute was mainly ethical. Fichte always thought more of things as they ought to be than of things as they are; moreover, he held that ultimately all apparent difficulties—by ordinary men esteemed impossibilities—must yield to the power of the divine idea, which he at one time identified with moral order. In his later life, he felt more and more disposed to distrust his abstract systems of morals. The circumstances of his earlier years—often difficult—had served chiefly to make his will harder; but the public calamities of later years touched his heart. His deeper thoughts and feelings were awakened. Kant—though comparatively a cold man—had before observed, that times of war and distress serve to excite moral emotions that may be called sublime. A common peril calls up in men a desire to have some common faith, support, or consolation; and this is especially true as regards men of wide sympathy. They feel at such times the burden of an universal and intolerable care; and then—as the Psalmist says—“they cry unto the Lord in their trouble.” The argument sometimes used against religious convictions, when these are excited by anxiety and distress, is but shallow. Unbelief—especially the practical atheism now so prevalent—is not recommended by the fact that it flourishes most in times of peace and prosperity. These are not the times when the souls of men are most widely expanded.

Fichte's later views of religion were closely united with his patriotic devotion. When the War of Liberation began, he showed himself ready to act in accordance with the teaching contained in one of his own poems:—

Let thine own Ego—all that's mortal—die;
Then God alone lives in thy life's endeavour.

His death was consistent with his life and his moral doctrine. By the victories of 1813, won in the neighbourhood of Berlin, the capital was made safe; and soon afterwards its public institutions were opened to receive wounded and disabled soldiers, sent from fields of recent battle at Grossbeeren and Dennewitz. Among the women of Berlin were many who cheerfully gave their services then, as nurses in the several hospitals, and Fichte's wife was one of the earliest volunteers. She had been for some months devoted to such ministrations, when she was seized with nervous fever. Her life was spared; but Fichte was soon afterwards attacked by the same disease, which in his case proved fatal. He died January 28, 1814.

The earlier moral teaching of Fichte, when given in a style like that of his own writings, might seem mysterious to many English readers. Yet it has been rather widely spread in England and Scotland; for it is substantially—certainly not as regards either style or details—the same moral doctrine that is found in the writings of Thomas Carlyle—especially in “Sartor Resartus” (1833). Nothing is intended to be said here that can fairly suggest anything like plagiarism or copying. Carlyle often and openly expressed high admiration of Fichte's moral character and teaching, but cared little for his metaphysics, and apparently knew little or nothing of his later religious philosophy. And of his earlier ethics Carlyle accepted only the first principles—above all the assertion of autonomy as belonging to our moral conscience. Of any connection existing between this assertion and the principle of political despotism, it is certain that Fichte knew nothing. On the contrary, the idea of true freedom—by which his whole life was inspired—led him to believe at first, that the idea might be realized in a society ruled by moral principles only. In his later years he maintained that true freedom can be enjoyed only in the Kingdom of Heaven.

CHAPTER IX.

CARLYLE.

How much has, by way of criticism, been said of Carlyle—of his “German style,” which is strictly speaking his own; of his humour, his graphic power, his poetry, and above all, his despotic political views! How little, comparatively speaking, has been said of that deep and hard problem—first suggested by Fichte—“how can moral order and political freedom be made to agree?”

Near the beginning of our century, there were living several writers who, by means of reviews and translations, spread in England and Scotland some knowledge of German literature. Among them may be named William Taylor, Scott, Coleridge, Shelley; and especially Carlyle, who in his early years studied the ethics of Kant and Fichte.

It will be understood, that no general account can here be given of the miscellaneous writings of Carlyle. Some few words may be said respecting his poetic genius, his original humour, and other salient traits in his writings; but we have chiefly to study the substance of his doctrine in relation to ethics, freedom, and religion.

There is an elect class of men—including certain literary men, poets, Christian teachers, philosophers and a few statesmen—who are associated mainly as having in common two characteristics: they are men of genius, and they have very wide sympathies. The number of these expansive men has been proportionately largely increased since the time of the French Revolution. To find proofs, we have but to turn over a few pages of modern literary history, English or German. Since 1789

the minds of many eminent men, both realists and idealists, have become more and more expansive. One, a born mathematician, Comte, undertakes a philanthropical re-adjustment, not only of the sciences, but also of human society. A lawyer, Bentham, more readily solves the latter difficulty by means of a new phrase, of which he makes an axiom. A poet, Shelley, accepts this axiom, and now sees a millennium near, with no more work to be done, save the abolition of all religion. Another poet, Wordsworth—more sober—appends to his poems an essay on our modern poor-laws, and a recommendation of co-operative productive industry. And in our own day, we see a born logician studying the land laws of various countries, while the man of high artistic culture, Ruskin, turns away from his gallery of paintings to study political economy, especially the organization of capital and labour.

To this class of men belonged Carlyle—one whose studies were so comprehensive, that, if classification could be attempted, we should hardly know where to begin. To say the least of his variety, he was, in his earlier days, eminent as a writer of great poetic power, though it was displayed mostly in genial criticism; then a mystic idealism was made the basis of stern moral teaching; and latterly his doctrines were promulgated by means of biography and history—to say nothing of political pamphlets. Yet through all this variety of forms we see the truth, that his earnest mind was most closely engaged in the study of one problem: we must have freedom, and we must have moral and social order; these two forces must learn to live in union—but how? That is the main question on which his thoughts were employed; and the study led him nearer and nearer, as he grew older, to a conclusion that has been described as a theory of hopeless despotism. In the sequel, we may notice the difficulty of the problem, and the cause of his failing to find a true solution. To show the cause of his failure will be our chief aim in the present chapter; but first of all may be given an outline of his biography.

THOMAS CARLYLE was born, in 1795, at Ecclefechan, a village not far from Dumfries. His father, a pious and shrewd man, was a devout reader of the Bible, and patient enough to study the works of the old Puritan, John Owen, written in "double Dutch," as was said by that master of clear and beautiful English, Robert Hall. After his course of studies in the University of Edinburgh—where he excelled mostly in mathematics—young Carlyle found himself compelled to disappoint his father's hope, that he would rise to be a minister in the Kirk. The son examined his own conscience as regards the question: "Do I now hold my father's faith?" and doubts already entertained made the answer "No" inevitable. Afterwards, he was for some years employed as a schoolmaster, and during this time was formed his friendship with Edward Irving, the eloquent preacher. "The last time I saw him," says Carlyle (in 1833), he was "hoary as with extreme age, and trembling over the brink of the grave," though little more than forty years old. The next year was his last. That friendship was on both sides firmly maintained, even at the time when Irving was called a wild visionary.

In 1818, Carlyle, tired of a schoolmaster's routine, returned to Edinburgh, and, by means of writing articles and making translations, earned enough money to support himself, while he employed his leisure in reading through a library of history, poetry and romance, and in making himself acquainted with the German language and its literature. One early result was his essay on the first part of "Faust." Soon afterwards, as tutor to Charles Buller, he held an appointment favourable to his literary progress. While the pupil acquired useful notions on social and political questions, the tutor found leisure to write his "Life of Schiller," and made a translation of Goethe's "Wilhelm Meister," soon followed by four volumes of translated German romances. These last-named translations were not produced as work suggested or desired by himself; but he found, apparently, some pleasure in introducing to English readers "Wilhelm

Meister—a book that Wordsworth, after trying to read it, cast away with moral disgust.

Of Carlyle's homage paid to Goethe, it is not easy to give any clearer interpretation than that given in his lectures on "Heroes and Hero-Worship." To this book the reader is referred for the elucidation of a mystery which we do not pretend to understand.

Soon after 1826, when he married, Carlyle retired into the solitude of Craigenputtock, a small farm which his wife inherited. The homestead was a plain-looking house, situated about a dozen miles from Dumfries, and secluded among moorlands. Dreary would the place have seemed without the presence of a wife who could listen to his wonderful talk, and could also talk in her turn. Though friends came but rarely to see him, his days here were neither dull nor unproductive. During his six years' abode in this lonely place he produced some of his best articles in the shape of essays and reviews, including an essay on Johnson, and one on Burns; both genial, appreciative and original, and well deserving notice in association with a later and excellent essay on the genius and character of Sir Walter Scott. Here also Carlyle wrote that strange, wild book—partly autobiographical—"Sartor Resartus."

In the next year he came to London, and settled himself in Cheyne Row, Chelsea—a suburb then quiet and rural—where he remained until his decease. His daily life here was a quiet routine of literary work, done in a way more sedate and tranquil than his later style of writing would suggest, relieved by a fair allowance of physical exercise, and not without the solace of friendly society. Friends who know him well during his prime of life in Cheyne Row, all concurred in saying that then his genius often shone out in conversation as brilliantly as in the best passages of his writings. In 1837 appeared his most powerful book, "The French Revolution," so surcharged with vigour, that for many readers a few pages are enough at a time. The very spirit of the epoch seems to have seized the writer. The

style is tumultuous. There is no repose. The words rush on with the violence of a hailstorm.

When the author had completed this history, the first volume of the manuscript was irrecoverably lost. It was lent to Mr. J. S. Mill, and was used by his cook for lighting the fire. Carlyle sat down calmly and re-wrote it, with hardly any substantial loss, and without the toil of renewed study. There had been a duplicate well preserved in his vivid memory. The story seems less incredible when we remember that Mozart could compose in silence, and without writing down a note, a long symphony for fifty or sixty instruments.

In 1845 appeared the author's successful book, "Oliver Cromwell's Letters and Speeches, with Elucidations." Its special object was to clear the memory of the Protector from the charge of hypocrisy. There was an intention not altogether dissimilar in the "History of Frederick the Great"—a most laborious work, of which the first volume appeared in 1858. The industry of research displayed in the ten volumes of this long history is marvellous. Taken as a whole, it may be called wearisome, as the writer himself confessed; though his highest powers of humorous and graphic portraiture find exercise in many passages. After 1865, when the last volume was published, Carlyle wrote no important work.

The saddest event of his life occurred in the same year, when his wife died suddenly, while he was far away from home. "The light of my life is quite gone out," said he; and the sequel proved that these words were not too expressive. He remained comparatively silent during his last fifteen years, though the Reform Bill of 1867 awakened his dread of an uneducated democracy, and so caused the publication of a rather violent pamphlet, entitled "Shooting Niagara—and After." Throughout his remaining years "the sage of Chelsea"—so he was often styled—was not forgotten; but after 1870 he was seen less and less frequently in Chelsea and the neighbourhood, or on his way to the

"London Library," of which he was still the President. Gradually, and without any assault of disease, his vital force grew weaker, his movements were slower, and his words were few; while his fading sight seemed looking far out and away from this passing world of "vanity and vexation of spirit." Yet his friends and numerous readers felt that a great blank was left in the world when it was known that on the 5th of February, 1881, Thomas Carlyle had died, in the eighty-sixth year of his age. A few days later, his remains were buried, with silent ceremonies, near the kirk of his native place.

Here nothing like a fair, general estimate of his life's work can be given; but a few of the main points toward which his energies were directed may be noticed, and lastly may be named the difficulty of the problem on which his mind was often engaged. To give in few words the main divisions of his work: he was a literary man of rare poetic genius, who was gradually led away from imaginative literature by earnest studies of morals regarded as the basis of society, and hence was naturally led on to studies of history and politics. These several studies were, of course, always more or less co-existent. The order in which they assumed prominence is noted above.

As fair examples of his purely literary writings, the essays on Johnson, Burns and Scott have been named. The third contains a strongly characteristic passage. The genial critic concludes by telling a quaint anecdote. There was once, he says, a silent and solitary Hindoo Fakir, who was interrogated respecting the motive of his secluded devotion. "I am cherishing in my heart," said he, "the sacred fire that will burn up the sins of this world." Of that fire, says Carlyle, there was too little in the genius of Sir Walter Scott.

His "Latter-Day Pamphlets" and other utterances of his reformatory fervour, especially as to certified Industrial Schools, can be but slightly noticed here. In these a most earnest love of order and honest work frequently urges him on to exaggeration. As to patiently living on in the midst

of this world of "shams," he says, with strong emphasis: "I would rather die!" For him, our state of society is "anarchy *plus* a policeman," our Parliament is a talking machine, and certain ameliorations of the criminal laws are denounced as striking off fetters that should bind the Evil One. Worst of all, when he hears how release from slavery has, in some places, been followed by a growth of indolence, he deplors the act of liberation, and becomes poetical when he describes Paradises that might be realized in certain tropical islands, by means of gangs of negroes "held steadily to their work."

Corruptio optimi pessima, is the gist of these and many other complaints, suggested by abuses of freedom. But where is their cure? That it must be severe, he is ready to see. To put down such abuses, he would uphold a despotism such as his critics have called "brute force." He finds a fair instrument of good government in the cudgel freely applied to the backs of subjects by Friedrich Wilhelm I. of Prussia, whose son is Carlyle's hero—the true king. Above all, he venerates the memory of Cromwell; but does not trouble himself with the question of providing a true succession of rulers like Cromwell. Thus the positive conclusion is something too much like despair.

Other vigorous essays and reviews—belonging partly to biography, partly to morals and criticism—must here be left unnoticed; for the question often raised respecting his tenets of religious belief requires some answer, while his views on social and political questions are such as suggest considerations of the highest importance. Of his strictly religious views, so far as any distinct tenets are concerned, he has told little, and therefore space is left for discussion that can hardly lead to any clear conclusion. His teaching has been called Pantheism, and it is true that in "*Sartor Resartus*" there are passages expressing sentiments of reverence, of which the universe itself seems to be the object; but his more permanent and characteristic teaching is simply moral; and, though highly original in diction and

style, is mostly based on the ethics of Kant and Fichte. Accordingly, he is sternly opposed to the sensual philosophy and utilitarian morals of the eighteenth century. Every man, he contends, may find out what is his duty, and in doing it he will find his true wisdom and sole happiness. If any few words could fairly represent all the passages where this cardinal teaching is enforced, the following might serve :

“ Laborare est orare. This highest Gospel forms the basis and worth of all other Gospels whatsoever. . . . Do thy little stroke of work ; this is Nature’s voice, and the sum of all the commandments to each man. Obedience is our universal duty and destiny, wherein whoso will not bend must break. . . . Our life is compassed round with necessity ; yet is the meaning of life itself [i.e., moral life] no other than freedom, than voluntary force : thus have we a warfare ; in the beginning, especially, a hard-fought battle. For the God-given mandate : ‘ Work thou in well-doing,’ lies mysteriously written in Promethean, prophetic characters in our hearts, and leaves us no rest, night or day, till it be deciphered and obeyed ; till it burn forth in our conduct, a visible, acted Gospel of freedom. And as the clay-given mandate : ‘ Eat thou and be filled,’ at the same time proclaims itself through every nerve, must there not be a confusion, a contest, before the better influence can become the upper ? ”

Then our obedience is not due to the universe. Intellectually, and as regards the universe, man is to be a fatalist ; but morally, and as regards the assertion of his own moral freedom, he is to be a fighter against destiny. But he is, at the same time, to yield obedience. To whom ? To God ; since the mandate to be obeyed is a “ God-given mandate.” Is this obedience to be rendered without the guidance of a revelation of God’s will ?—without the strength and consolation derived from faith, hope and love ? These are the questions to which we are led by Carlyle, as by the earlier teaching of Fichte. The voice of conscience, said Fichte in his earlier teaching, proclaims our duty, which is to be done

simply because it is our duty. The fulfilment of our duty is our only true happiness, which is identical with a constant assertion of our moral freedom. Thus we are introduced into a new life, are raised to a higher stage of existence, and become more and more conscious of the truth that the moral order of the world, to which our own work is made freely subservient, is Divine and eternal. In this knowledge we have our only possible knowledge of God. There is, says Fichte, no other God. This, so far as the basis of morals is concerned, is a true summary of his *earlier* teaching. Carlyle does not—so far as we remember—refer to Fichte's *later* teaching, in which we find such admissions as these: "Every man must die to sin, and lead a new life, and this must be done as the act of his own moral freedom; yet it can be done only by looking for aid to Christ—the source of a new life. Through Him must enter all who ever come into the kingdom of heaven."

One part of Kant's moral doctrine is here omitted. He says, our knowledge of a supreme moral law postulates the existence of God, whose will is the basis of that law; but further than this we can discover nothing of God: our reason gives us no proof of His existence. As regards the substance of his moral teaching, Carlyle, for the most part, agrees well with Kant, and with the earlier teaching of Fichte—certainly not with the later. The difference is that their style is strict and consequent, while his own is homiletic and discursive. However, as viewed with regard to their common negations or omissions, all three are alike. They do not assert that such morals as they teach must be founded on a revealed religion; they do not refer to revealed Christianity as the basis of religion and morals. Yet their more special ideas of morality are, for the most part, Christian. Whence were these ideas obtained? especially, we would ask, whence come these ideas of moral freedom, absolute duty and absolute obedience? This is indeed, a large inquiry, dividing itself into three distinct questions, of which only the first can be noticed here. Whence, then,

we ask, have we our modern, as distinct from the ancient heathen, notion of freedom? Let this question be truly answered; then answers to the two remaining questions will be readily found.

The old Teutonic word "free" still retains its earlier and its later meaning; the former political and secular, the latter religious and Christian. Our common phrase "free of the city," gives us the earlier: the secular or political meaning. Used in this sense, the word simply denotes that a man has certain privileges, is recognized as belonging to a municipality or a corporation, and is, therefore, not to be treated as a mere man (*homo*), nor as a slave, nor as a foreigner. In this sense the word is supplied in our English version of the New Testament (Acts xxii. 28), where St. Paul says: "I was *free* born." The freedom or municipal privilege here asserted is also referred to in several other passages of the same book: xvi. 37, 38; xxiii. 27, and xxv. 10. But, obviously, this is not the sense in which the word "free" is used mostly by St. Paul when he is speaking or writing to Christians, as in Galatians iv. and other places. Nor is it the sense in which the word is employed in translating the words spoken by Our Lord (John viii. 32, 36) when referring to the freedom of true Christians. This is a spiritual and infinite freedom, first revealed in the soul united with God Himself, then made manifest in practical life, and gradually expanding itself in the world, but only in a true proportion and just so far as the reign of God is extended.

We have, then, a secular and a Christian idea of freedom, and it is especially deserving of notice that, with regard to its formal extent, our modern idea of freedom must be called Christian. This historical fact remains firm, even when we put aside all thoughts of faith in Christ, or indeed all thoughts of religion. It is not said, we can abolish the Christian religion and still retain the true, concrete and (to use an old word) "unitative" idea of Christian freedom. This is impossible. But we can secularize the idea, and, while retaining it so far as regards its general definition as

to its extension, we can wholly change its associations ; just as we might close all churches and chapels, and yet keep Sundays, though in a new style, as days for rest and recreation. We can thus take a part of Christianity, while we refuse the rest ; and this, indeed, is done to a very large extent. Men who refuse to enter into the kingdom of heaven hold firmly their modern idea of man's birthright—freedom—not dreaming that this is historically a Christian idea. They hold a Christian doctrine, though they are not Christians. This apparent paradox is a fact, and one so important that it goes a great way towards explaining the difficulty of the problem of true freedom in incessant conflict with false freedom. That problem much engaged the attention and at last wearied out the patience of Thomas Carlyle. "How shall we keep the true freedom, and be well rid of the false?" This, in substance, was his earnest question oft repeated. In the world, he maintained, as it is nowadays we have a great deal too much of this "sham freedom : 'freedom' to be false, not only in speech, but all through our lives—"freedom" to build, with bad mortar, thin, tumble-down houses ; to sell deceptive furniture, clothing, food, and even medicine ; in politics, "freedom" to raise factions and obstruct the course of good government ; in culture, "freedom" to reduce art and literature to the rank of amusements for the idle, not to say the dissolute ; in philosophy, "freedom" to blow bubbles called "systems," and to talk about matters of which we know nothing at all ; above all, "freedom" to make gods of money-bags. These vanities were sore vexations to the aged "sage of Chelsea," and his lamentations were often pathetic. "They cannot make a good brick nowadays," said he ; and of numerous houses he complained that it was not conceivable how children, reared in such dwellings and amid such surroundings, could grow up as honest men. These and many similar complaints are made almost tedious by iteration, but they have had their use in our times. Who can say they were not urgently needed ?

Enough has been said to show that Carlyle belonged, as we have said, to an elect class of thoughtful men, especially distinguished by their world-wide sympathies. The cares of the world around him, and fears respecting the social welfare of generations unborn, disturbed the repose of his once retired study in Cheyne Row. His sympathy was sincere and deep, though often expressed in his own eccentric style, and with ironical humour of the kind described as "grim." His writings lead, in several respects, to negative results. But he strongly asserted that the very basis of society must be nothing less than sound individual morality. Will not further inquiry lead to the conclusion that true morality must be based on religion?

Above all, his writings have forcibly suggested the question: Whence came our modern idea of freedom—of freedom belonging, not specially to this man as an Athenian, or to that man as a Roman, but to every man, simply because he is a man, the son of "Our Father in heaven"? Whence came this mighty idea now pervading the minds of men? For the most part, they never think of any such question; yet history assures us that the idea was not always known in the world. Neither Plato nor Aristotle ever dreamed of such an idea. Whence, then, has it come? From Christianity, is the answer; and to Christianity it must lead us back, or must leave us in anarchy. The validity of this position must, of course, be tested by the history of the last two thousand years; for here is asserted a fact of which the majority—including many highly intelligent men—are apparently still ignorant. Just as, for the most part, we are unconscious of the influence of solar warmth pervading our physical life, so are we ignorant of the source and the energy of the idea that, in a moral sense, pervades the very air we breathe. The abolition of Christianity is not so easy as some philosophers would have us believe. Meanwhile, there is one thought strongly suggested by the impending conflicts of our times. The idea of freedom, pervading society throughout Christendom—beneficent as it has been

in union with that organism, the *whole* of Christianity, to which it truly belongs—may develop, in its disunion, an expansive force threatening the dissolution of our social and political institutions. In the later years of his life, serious fears of such a result seemed to haunt the mind of Carlyle.

The great fact of his life is this—he grappled with the hard problems of society; he sought their solution; and in doing this he hardly made any distinct reference to the aid that might be afforded by our Christian religion. Yet it is not suggested that he is to be classed with the multitudes of secular journalists and other writers—men who are ever proposing remedies for evils called social and political, while their roots are immorality and irreligion. Carlyle could look beyond the surface; he could see, at least, that moral power was wanting.

No man of his time has done more to awaken interest in moral and religious questions of the highest importance. By bringing into contact with the realities of life, such moral philosophy as he had learned, he has shown how little can be done by cold ethical teaching. Despairing of moral measures, he has next recommended despotism, as a preventative of anarchy; but this he has done with hardly any hope of success. He sees in the future vast questions arising—whose solution will require more than human wisdom. They must be solved either with or without the aid of religion. Can they be solved without such aid?—To this question he leads us; yet he gives us no clear answer. He suggests the problem; and, as regards its solution, he confesses that his mind is greatly vexed by fears of the future—fears that, as forcibly expressed in his declamatory style, have served to call attention to this one question, which he himself might have called the “world’s question” of the present time:—How shall society be saved, when freedom is on every side extending its claims, and faith, the basis of authority, is failing?—Though it is not proposed by himself, in so many words, the one main question treated so earnestly in his writings is in substance this—How shall the world go on without religion?

Compared with the importance of his chief purpose—to call attention to this inquiry—all that has been said of his graphic power, his stern humour, and his tumultuous style, is but a trifle hardly deserving notice. We do not say to criticise the tone in which a watchman utters a call of alarm; but rather pay attention to the meaning of the call.

There are English readers—not a few—to whom the style of systematic philosophy is wearisome. Everywhere they wish to have, not the processes of thinking, but their practical results as relating to morals, social existence, and religious belief. This is especially the case when the ethical writings of such men as Kant and Fichte are noticed. Morals without motives; ethical theories without authority; these—say practical men—are but dry studies and suitable only for professors; all that we care to know is the truth that has life and power in it. For such truth Carlyle inquired earnestly in his earlier years, when he studied Kant and Fichte; and the results of his studies are found here and there in his works. He found in moral philosophy, as he thought, a sure basis for a doctrine of good morals, such as were suitable for the guidance of his practical life, because they agreed with the dictates of his own conscience—but, as we have said, he was a man of wide sympathies, and could therefore find no rest in any system serving only for the moral guidance of himself. He wished to find also a basis of authority on which society itself might safely rest. Though the terms in which his sympathies were expressed seemed often too harsh and severe, he was one who cared much for mankind; one of those men who have been boldly—yet not altogether erroneously—described by a poet as heroes; men called “to stand up, and support the intolerable strain and stress of the universal.” He found, in the solitude of his earlier life, teaching that seemed to afford for himself a firm moral support; but in his later life his interest in matters real, historical and practical was widely extended; and he was thus led to care—almost too bitterly—for the moral order of the wide world all around him. Thus he tested the practical and social value of his own early

philosophy; and his writings tell us how far it was found deficient.

His positive ethical teaching—setting aside some discursive passages that have been called “pantheistic”—is substantially identical with the moral doctrine of Kant and Fichte; in other words it asserts the autonomy or independence of man’s conscience. This is the doctrine maintained by Kant in 1787, of which the practical inefficiency was confessed by that writer in 1793. Again, and still more boldly, it was asserted by Fichte in 1796-8; but as early as 1806, and more explicitly in 1813, he retracted his assertion of man’s moral autonomy—at least, he then ceased to regard morality as a sufficient substitute for religion. Regardless apparently of these remarkable retractations, Carlyle still held firmly the principle of man’s moral independence; and—as far as we can see—he was not led by any later study and experience to modify his ethical doctrine—certainly not so far as to confess the dependence of such moral teaching on the aid that might be afforded by any revealed religion. His teaching, therefore, was moral, social, and political; but was *not* religious in any distinct sense of the word. It will be observed, that the word “irreligious”—so often employed with more or less reference to some personal bias or intention—is here avoided. Carlyle recognizes in the voice of conscience “God’s own mandate.” This is clear; and it is equally clear that he pays the utmost possible respect to the sincerity and earnestness of certain men whose religious views were definite and positive; but the men so honoured are those who have given proof of great strength—especially strength exerted in moral or political warfare. Beyond this, however, little is known respecting the religious faith of Carlyle.

There remains still to be given an analysis of his ethical principles as practically applied in aid of his social and political doctrines. Here the practical results of his philosophy lead us back to the great question which has been already suggested—can the freedom proclaimed by

Christ be maintained and developed without submission to his authority?

It should be observed that everything said in this chapter of Fichte, will refer only to his *first* philosophy. Carlyle in his positive ethical teaching mainly repeats the *first* doctrine of Fichte. Here man's own intelligent will, as expressed in his primary self-assertion—"ego"—is made the basis of ethics. But man, says Fichte, is no sooner self-conscious, than he is also conscious of the fact that there exists—as placed opposite to himself—a world of phenomena by which the assertion of his own will is apparently limited. This world of appearances presents to his notice both attractions and obstructions, which exist, however, only to be resisted and overcome by the moral will of man. The world has no authority over him; but must be made to yield. So far we speak only of the phenomenal world surrounding man. But his will has next to encounter another and a more important limitation; for the world contains persons, each confronting the "ego"—so Fichte says—with an assertion of equality. Each claims dominion over the world. The true "ego" that ought to rule, is not one as asserted by an individual, but one as asserting itself in a common consent of many. Hence comes moral order. In order to avoid a "*bellum omnium contra omnes*," men now recognize their equal personal rights of existence. Thus arise institutions in which all have a common interest; and to maintain them the State—a collective will—is armed with executive power to enforce law in those cases where defect of conscience requires such correction. So far a common moral will is exerted to establish such order as is required by society; and the order so based is called "legality."

But the final aim of the will is an assertion of perfect independence or freedom, which is something higher than "legality," and is here called "morality." This is a moral order both external and internal, and leads on to a perfect freedom.

In morality the motive is internal; in law the will recog-

nizes now its own assertion. Obedience now is freedom. Every physical impulse, every seduction, all sentiments of hope, fear, and desire—these must all be made more and more subservient to the will, until it is victorious, and now the true man can say of himself—

“Jam non consilio bonus, sed more eò perductus, ut non tantum rectè facere possim, sed nisi rectè facere non possim.”

When this can be truly said, then man as he ought to be truly exists.

Here there might seem to arise a self-contradiction; for this perfect obedience must apparently be a state of repose, and the aim of morality is free activity, says Fichte. He therefore goes on to say—our self-assertion, in our maintenance of a virtuous life, will always have to encounter oppositions, and so we shall always find plenty of incitements to action. “To work is our destiny.”—How often is this saying repeated by Carlyle!—Man’s life is not to be a repose after victory; but a perpetual winning of victories. He must not retire to a hermit’s cell, there to lead a quietistic or ascetic life. Incessant fighting is required to make the hero who, in the midst of all his battles, can say always—“I am free; I yield obedience to nobody and to nothing.”

Again, the reader must be reminded of Carlyle, whose moral teaching is a sort of Berserker’s philosophy. The ethical basis belongs to Fichte; the stern Scandinavian tone of the exposition belongs to Carlyle.

“Non serviam” is the principle of the morality described. Has this morality then any relation to religion?—“None whatever,” is the reply given by Fichte [in his *first* philosophy]. “Moral order is supreme, and of any other God I know nothing.” Accordingly, it must be stated as a fact—the ethical teaching of Fichte is non-religious. The righteousness aimed at is his own; the endeavour is made throughout in his own strength; and the victory is won by his own perseverance.

Such egotism—as contrasted with a merely puerile con-

ceit—may be called sublime; but after all it is egotism—intellectual, moral, and clearly distinct from all that is sensual and selfish—at the same time distinct from that consciousness of dependence which belongs essentially to religion.

Fichte recognizes as divine nothing save the “moral order” of the world, of which man is assured in his own conscience. Carlyle recognizes dimly some divine idea struggling for development in this chaotic world; and more clearly he recognizes in himself the dictates of conscience as equivalent to “God’s own mandates.” So far the doctrines of Fichte and Carlyle may be said to differ—at least formally; but both are equally asserted as independent of all religious aid; in a word, therefore, both are merely subjective. They refer us to no objective authority—to no dictates clear, practical, and at the same time divine. For the rest, Carlyle’s teaching is a general eulogy of industry, here and there followed by a prediction that a moral victory will surely follow our fidelity in obeying the clear dictates of our own conscience. Many are the passages of which the following are examples:—

“Blessed is he who has found his work; let him ask no other blessedness. He has a work, a life-purpose; he has found it, and will follow it! How, as a free-flowing channel, dug and torn by noble force through the sour mud-swamp of one’s existence, like an ever-deepening river, there it runs and flows;—draining off the sour festering water gradually from the root of the remotest grass-blade; making, instead of pestilential swamp, a green fruitful meadow with its clear-flowing stream. How blessed for the meadow itself, let the stream and its value be great or small! Labour is life; from the inmost heart of the worker rises his God-given force, the sacred celestial life-essence breathed into him by Almighty God; from his inmost heart awakens him to all nobleness—to all knowledge, ‘self-knowledge’ and much else, so soon as work fitly begins. Knowledge? The knowledge that will hold good in work-

ing—cleave thou to that; for nature herself accredits that, says Yea to that. Properly thou hast no other knowledge but what thou hast got by working: the rest is yet all a hypothesis of knowledge; a thing to be argued of in schools, a thing floating in the clouds, in endless logic-vortices, till we try it and fix it. Doubt, of whatever kind, can be ended by action alone.” . . .

“It is the right and noble alone that will have victory in this struggle; the rest is wholly an obstruction, a postponement and fearful imperilment of the victory. Towards an eternal centre of right and nobleness, and of that only, is all this confusion tending. We already know whither it is all tending; what will have victory, what will have none! . . . Await the issue. In all battles, if you await the issue, each fighter has prospered according to his right. His right and his might, at the close of the account, were one and the same. He has fought with all his might, and in exact proportion to all his right he has prevailed. His very death is no victory over him.”

By Fichte it is clearly asserted, and by Carlyle it is generally implied, that morals and religion are one and the same; or that religion—if supposed to exist at all, as distinct from morals—can exist only as a shadow.

This teaching has already been so widely accepted, and has so far seemed to be supported by many plausible reasonings, that its truth to multitudes now seems infallible. Yet it is a doctrine supported neither by man’s instincts, nor by the main facts recorded in the pages of universal history.

The assertion of Fichte—that such morals as he defines are innate in man—stands in opposition to the whole history of Christianity, and moreover is contradicted by the history of every religion that has ever existed. Opposed to such a world of facts, the dogma of Fichte’s *first* teaching must be rejected.

Religion and ethics are at once closely united and clearly distinct. History and profound philosophy agree well in their recognition of this distinction.

What is religion?—As existing in all times and all nations, it arises from man's earnest desire to know something of the relations existing between himself and the Power—or the Powers—by whom the world is governed. More briefly it may be said, religion arises from a sense of dependence; and with equal truth it may be said that religious thought has been suggested by inevitable limitations of our freedom. We are to some extent free; yet we feel and know that on every side our freedom is bounded by an over-ruling Power. We wish to exert our own will, so far as it may be allowed; but at the same time we wish to act in concert with another and a higher will. In some form or another religion appears, and gives answer to the inquiry thus suggested. Consequently we find that, in all times and among all nations, laws and morals have required the aid of some religious sanction. "The gods," it is said, "have sanctioned this course of action; but they have denounced that."

Let it be granted that—as rationalists say—the actions so respectively sanctioned or denounced are, by man's own conscience, already defined as in one case good, in the other evil. This dogma does not diminish the claims of religion. For let the evil denounced be murder; and say it is forbidden by conscience. Yet in times of political furor, the crime is defended—as Carlyle himself tells us—by myriads of men and women. In the time of peace—for which they are indebted solely to Christianity—sciolists make morals to serve as substitutes for God's laws. But the morals so made are but toys for idle minds; and in the time of trial—when firm laws will be required—the distinction between morals and religion—now so much questioned—will need no philosophy to make it clear. There are some philosophers to whom may be addressed such advice as, "Wait awhile." As regards their theories of man's innate sentiments, and his "moral autonomy," their true value will be found when they are tried; and at the same time will be tested the strength of the command, "Thou shalt not kill"—proclaimed by God.

All this is philosophy that has been well understood by

innumerable people belonging to the heathen world. Among them have lived philosophers, in intellect deeper, stronger, and clearer—as in morals purer and more sincere—than many of our modern antichristian moralists; and those heathen philosophers could see that religion—even when mixed with gross errors—was something more than a shadow. Among German philosophers the greatest—Hegel—has indeed said, that “morality is the substance of society;” but he has added the words—more deeply true—“religion is the substance of morality.”

As might be expected, this profound and eternal truth, which no “science” will ever destroy, has been recognized, and expressed in their way by the greatest poets in all ages. It might be interesting to collate their evidence on this point; but space forbids, and it must suffice here to name but one example—one well known by every classic reader.

Surely, if any natural laws, or moral instincts, might be safely left without the sanction of religion, it would seem that domestic ties—the laws of the family—might so be left to take care of themselves; but this was not the feeling of heathen antiquity, as interpreted by Sophocles, in his “Antigone.” When the rebel Polynices has fallen in battle, the despot Creon proclaims death as the penalty to be paid by anyone who may give to his foe’s remains the honours of interment. In defiance of this proclamation, the rebel’s true sister, Antigone, buries the remains; and then she calmly appears before Creon. In amazement he asks, how she has dared to disobey his commands; and this is her reply:—

Οὐδὲ σθένειν τοσοῦτον φόβῳ τὰ σὰ
κηρύγμαθ’ ὥστ’ ἀγραπτα κάσφαλῇ θεῶν
νόμιμα δύνασθαι θνητὸν’ ὄνθ’ ὑπὲρδραμεῖν.

“I did not believe that *your* proclamation—you being a mortal—was strong enough to prevail over the unwritten but imperishable laws of the gods.”

In this sublime response the central truth of religion is asserted. At heart, that which is truly, intensely human,

and that which is divine are united. Between the two—always remaining distinct—there has never existed that absolute separation imagined by the deists of the eighteenth century. Antigone—not living in an “enlightened age”—expresses her own natural sentiments, and at the same time claims for them an authority not less than divine. Accordingly, when her protest has been disregarded by the despot, next appears the aged priest, to give warning that the vengeance of the gods will not be long delayed; and hardly has he ceased speaking, when fall—one soon after another—the bolts of heaven; and the tyrant—to use his own words—shrinks back into his own “nothingness.” This is sublime poetry, well employed in the expression of a profound religious truth.

And the same truth is found in the religious traditions and usages of peoples called barbarous. Everywhere man seeks the aid of a Power to which he ascribes some characteristics like his own; and in proportion as his own character rises or falls, so rises or falls his faith. The worship of senseless nature does not exist, and absolute worship of one's self is a modern invention, that even now—though recommended by so many reasoners—is not generally accepted as a substitute for religion. The practical lives of men are controlled by three forces—their own instincts, the laws of the land, and religion; and in many cases, where the last factor seems deficient to a large extent, it is not altogether absent. As regards certain classes of men—educated so as to be made like knives, at once sharp and thin—religion may decline, and perhaps may ultimately die; but the process will generally be slow. Men who are busy in suggesting how science and education may in the future take the place of faith, too hastily assume that they know—or can even guess, with approximate correctness—what man may be when left utterly destitute of religious feeling and belief.

But was it ever proposed, or suggested by Carlyle, that the coming problems of society should be encountered, or

could be solved without the aid of a positive and definite belief? The question cannot be answered at once briefly and distinctly. Of all facts connected with his teaching, the most certain is this—that in passages too numerous to mention, he refers to “the Eternal Powers that live for ever,” and in contrast with their decrees, treats with contempt the creeds and observances of many who, in his day, supposed themselves to be devoted to the service of religion. How severely, for example, did he analyze the religious views of Coleridge. One passage in the analysis may be quoted:—

“Coleridge’s talk and speculation was the emblem of himself: in it, as in him, a ray of heavenly inspiration struggled, in a tragically ineffectual degree, with the weakness of flesh and blood. He says once, ‘he had skirted the howling deserts of infidelity;’ this was evident enough; but he had not had the courage, in defiance of pain and terror, to press resolutely across said deserts to the new firm lands of faith beyond. He preferred to create logical *fata-morganas* for himself on the hither side, and laboriously solace himself with these.”

Clearly enough—as a critic* has observed—the passage describes the character of a man who willingly deceived himself into thinking or believing what he only wished to believe; and the context makes it evident that the same censure applies to many of his friends and disciples; men who—more or less guided by his teaching—were led into certain forms of belief, here described as “ecclesiastical chimæras which now roam the earth in a very lamentable manner.” Thus are dismissed—among other “spectral Puseyisms and monstrous illusory hybrids”—the religious views and sentiments of such men as Maurice and Julius Hare.

All this is negative. What is wanted is some clear account respecting those “new firm lands of faith beyond the desert;” but where does the author give the account?

* R. H. Hutton (Art. “Carlyle;” *Good Words*, April, 1881).

It might be sought—with some expectation of finding—in the “Life of Sterling;” and here indeed is found almost all that is said by way of reply:—

“True he had his religion to seek, and painfully shape together for himself, out of the abysses of conflicting disbelief and sham-belief and bedlam delusion, now filling the world, as all men of reflection have; and in this respect too—more especially as his lot in the battle appointed for us all was, if you can understand it, victory and not defeat—he is an expressive emblem of his time, and an instruction and possession to his contemporaries.”

Eloquent as all this may be, it fails to supply the information required. What still remains wanting is some clear account of that passage in which Coleridge (we are told) made a failure—the passage “across the deserts to the new firm lands of faith beyond.” The reader is still left to inquire, “Where are the new firm lands of faith?”—Finding no reply, another critic*—gentle even to a fault—has expressed his disappointment in words not to be forgotten:—

[The author] he says, “has no right—no man has any right—to weaken or to destroy a faith which he cannot or will not replace with a loftier. . . . He ought to have said nothing, or he ought to have said more. Scraps of verse from Goethe, and declamations, however brilliantly they may be phrased, are but a poor compensation for the slightest obscuring of the ‘hope of immortality brought to light by the Gospel,’ and by it conveyed to the hut of the poorest man, to awaken his crushed intelligence, and lighten the load of his misery.”

The difficulty of defining clearly the position held by Carlyle in relation to Christianity has been felt by many who have studied his writings. They have found there no solution of the questions so often suggested:—In the coming trials of society, is there nothing to be done by Christianity?—Is it, as a power once mighty in the world, now to be

* George Brimley, *Essays*; 1858 (*Carlyle's Life of Sterling*).

regarded as extinct?—Does the author intend that this conclusion should be intimated by his silence?—Does he ever deal with the question so forcibly put, only a few years ago, by the Emperor of Germany? It was in 1869, that—in giving a reply to an address presented by the Synod of Brandenburg—the Emperor used these words:—

“What is to become of us, if we have no faith in the Saviour, the Son of God? If he is not the Son of God, his commands, as coming from a man only, must be subject to criticism. What is to become of us in such a case?”

The words—so manly and direct—are at the present time worth more than whole libraries filled with social and pseudo-ethical philosophy; but it is especially their clearness that is here to be noticed. Were the question of authority now urged to its ultimate point, we know where is that original source to which the Emperor's own voice would direct us. In this respect, he remains an Abdiel in his time.

But where is the final authority to which Carlyle refers? As regards every individual—he refers him to his own conscience; but what must the answer be as regards society—or say rather the people? To what authority must they ultimately submit?—A reply is given in the following passage. The writer has previously given some account of Friedrich Wilhelm I of Prussia; and thus concludes an estimate of his character:—

“No Berserker of them, nor Odin's self, was a bit of truer human stuff; I confess his value to me in these sad times is rare and great. Considering the usual histrionic Papin's digester, truculent charlatan, and other species of kings, alone obtainable for the sunk flunkey populations of an era given up to Mammon and the worship of its own belly, what would not such a population give for a Friedrich Wilhelm, to guide it on the road back from Orcus a little? ‘Would give,’ I have written; but alas, it ought to have been ‘should give.’ What they ‘would’ give is too mournfully plain to me—in spite of ballot-boxes—a steady and

tremendous truth, from the days of Barabbas downwards and upwards."

In all the numerous works of the author, hardly one passage more characteristic than this can be found. It is apparently a sincere confession of despair respecting any future union of social order with Christian freedom. The king so eulogized was, as is well known, even meanly provident, while careful to increase the material resources, and above all to strengthen the military power of Prussia; but he was in his private character a man remarkably coarse, ignorant, and cruel; and as a king, he ruled strictly by means of physical force. Yet the despotic government of such a king is described as something desirable, but too good to be restored now. This brief comment does not give the whole meaning of the passage—it certainly fails to show all the force of the allusion to Barabbas.

A conclusion like this expresses hardly less than despair respecting the progress of society. Must the words be accepted as deliberate and final?—A doubt may perhaps be suggested; yet toward such a conclusion we are led by an able critic,* already referred to, whose remarks may here be quoted:—

"I do not think that any portion of Carlyle's works contains clear traces of the sort of grounds on which he came to reject the Christian revelation. . . But I should judge that at the root of it was a certain contempt for the raw material of human nature, as inconsistent with the Christian view, and an especial contempt for the particular effect produced upon that raw material by what he understood to be the most common result of conversion. . . Certainly he always represents the higher fortitude as a sort of 'obstinacy,' rather than as a pious submission to the Divine will. . .

"Of the existence of something hard—something of the genuine task-master—in the mind of the Creator, something requiring obstinacy, and not mere submission, to satisfy its

* R. H. Hutton (*Good Words*, April, 1881).

requirements, Carlyle had a deep conviction. I think his view of Christianity was as of a religion that had something too much of love in it. . . His love of despots who had any ray of honesty or insight in them, his profound belief that mankind should try and get such despots to order their doings for them, his strange hankerings after the institution of slavery, as the only reasonable way in which the lower races of men might serve their apprenticeship to the higher races—all seems to me a sort of reflection of the doctrine that life is a subordination to a hard taskmaster, directly or by deputy, and that so far from grumbling over its severities, we must just grimly set to work and be thankful it is not worse than it is. . . That seems to me to represent Carlyle's real conviction. He could not believe that God does, as a matter of fact, care very much for the likes of us; or even is bound to care. His imagination failed to realize the need or reality of Divine love. . .

“Such seems to me to be the general drift of Carlyle's religion. He has had his incredulity as to the Christian miracles, historical evidence, and the rest; but his chief doubt has been as to the stuff of which mankind is made—on which his verdict seems to me to be this—‘not of the kind worth saving or to be saved, after Christ's fashion, at all, but to be bettered, if at all, after some other and much ruder fashion, the ‘beneficent whip’ being, perhaps, the chief instrumentality.”

If these remarks were accepted as belonging only to the portraiture of an individual, whose belief was overshadowed by a rather gloomy temperament, they would have little importance, and here would be out of place. But they are not so accepted. On the contrary, it is submitted that in the case of Carlyle there is seen but one example—one certainly remarkable—of a process that has been going on now, to say the least, for some centuries, and has already led to the despair of many minds. There is no superstition in this opinion; for it will be found true, even when no reference is made to any future life. On one side hard and

narrow notions of religion; on the other a proud and cold philosophy, setting up itself as a substitute for religion—these have been the two chief factors in the process of negation; and those who would know the results, have but to study the condition to which both religion and philosophy are now reduced in North Germany.

The despair ascribed to Carlyle was mainly the result of hard and false teaching—"philosophy" so called—teaching that Hegel (who surely knew something of it) denounced as "hypochondriacal." The general tone of disappointment pervading especially the later writings of Carlyle, was indeed made emphatic by his peculiar style; but was not therefore a tone merely individual. It has been heard often enough lately; for it is especially appropriate to the last fashionable philosophy—pessimism. The philosophy that began in pride has ended in despair.

For Carlyle the end of all his philosophy, and of all his historical research, was especially a despair respecting all endeavours to preserve moral order in union with political freedom. Yet, as he tells us, it is now accepted by men as an infallible dogma, that—whether for good or for evil—freedom is the destination of man. More and more the many must have their share in the government of the world. This may be true; but the truth is one liable to gross misconception and abuse. Hardly anyone living in his age knew this danger so well as Carlyle himself—witness his story of the French Revolution. But did he not know, at the same time, that the idea of true and universal freedom is essentially and historically Christian?

Since he wrote so much about slavery—and went so far as to recommend its modern revival—it might be presumed that he had read something of its history—in Sparta, Athens, Rome, and ancient Germany—and knew something also of its gradual abolition. However that may be, it seems clear that he had never studied deeply the chief problem suggested by his own writings—

Never "freedom for all men" is essentially a Christian

idea — may not our modern rejection of Christianity lead ultimately—though through ages of controversy and suffering—to a reassertion of Christianity, as the only possible means by which true freedom can be established?

Christianity has promised to men—in the first place, freedom from the bondage of sin; next, to men free because regenerated, “the liberty of the sons of God;” lastly, such an expansion of practical liberty—intellectual, social, and political—as could never be enjoyed in the ancient heathen world. The true and concrete freedom so proclaimed is at once internal and external, spiritual and practical; first a renewal in the souls of men, and then a vast amelioration of their social circumstances. Thus only is to be finally established in this world the “Kingdom of Heaven.”

The proclamation then is two-fold; or includes two promises that can never be separated. But men have claimed and still will claim, as their natural birthright, the latter, while the former is rejected. Hence the difficulties of modern society—the problems capable of solution with the aid of Christianity; but incapable of solution without it.

So vast is the Christian idea of “freedom for all men,” that eighteen centuries have been required to carry into effect only one part of its evolution—the abolition of slavery.

So closely was the institution incorporated with the whole structure of the ancient heathen world, that had any sudden and violent effort been made to abolish it at once, that world would have been plunged into anarchy. Nevertheless the process of liberation—sometimes slow—has been sure; and wherever Christianity has breathed, the chains of the slave have been melted, as ice is thawed by the breath of spring.

Still there remains to be completed a vast process of liberation and union, in order that finally the “Kingdom of Heaven” may be established in this world.

How can the design be fulfilled?—Not by law; not by

political power ; not by philosophy. Only by means of one love—one submission to One—one religion.

The great controversy of the eighteenth century—from the consequences of which we have not yet escaped—began with setting in opposition the claims of humanity on one side, and those of Christianity on the other.

The end of the controversy will be found in a union of humanitarian with Christian ideas.

CHAPTER X.

PRACTICAL RESULTS.—TRANSITION.

THE religious philosophy and the historical criticism that in Germany have followed a course partly anticipated by Fichte, must be carefully noticed in some later chapters. Here they are first named, in a rapid historical sketch, in order to show their connection with that ethical philosophy of which an account has been already given.

The close of a movement in philosophy is not often well marked by the close of a century. Yet the end of the eighteenth century may be described as a remarkable turning-point both in history and in philosophy. The decennium immediately preceding, and that next following the year 1800, might—taken together—be called an age of transition.

Among the men more or less celebrated, and then living in England and Germany, not a few were born near the time 1770. Accordingly, they were young students at the time of the Revolution. As examples may be named:—Schleiermacher, Chateaubriand, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Fichte, Hegel, Schelling, the brothers Schlegel, Southey and Steffens; men remarkably different in some respects, but all having a common intention—a wish to render aid in the restoration of religion.

It has been noticed that, among philosophers, Fichte was the first who restored a respect for the historical claims of Christianity. His earlier writings belong to the eighteenth century; his later to the nineteenth. The change that occurred in his opinions—especially noticeable as presenting a strong contrast to his own earlier teaching—was but one

pulsation in a general movement then taking place in the minds of many. How far has its aim—a restoration of faith—been successful?—A consideration of the question is postponed. Here must first be noticed some practical results of rationalism.

The practical results of destructive historical criticism—spread so widely by Semler and his followers—remain in the present time, while, comparatively speaking, the ethical writings of Kant, Fichte and others are forgotten. Moral philosophy—as a proposed substitute for religion—has proved a failure. There are fears now expressed by many—including some who do not call themselves Christians—lest the coming generation of men should find themselves left altogether destitute of religion.

Speculative philosophy has, in our time, made some advances toward something like a reconciliation with religion. But that supposed reconciliation of philosophical ideas with Christian tenets is one of which the people understand little or nothing. They have been assured—on the ground of assertions made by men of learning—that Christian teaching has from the first included a series of myths and inventions, mixed with a few facts that cannot be easily verified in this late age. “When differences among great biblical critics are so numerous—and often so important—how shall we, unlearned men, presume so far as to say a word about them? At the same time, how can we—after all your negations—hold firmly any opinion, or any belief?” These are fair examples of a logic not unpopular in Germany.

A hard intellectual character has prevailed long enough, even among learned professors of theology, and has now been impressed upon multitudes of the people. Often has it been suggested, and indeed affirmed, that religious sentiments may remain alive, when all creeds are dead and forgotten; but the history of our times shows rather, that faith and feeling may fade and die together.

An attempt to ascribe any special causes for the unbelief

and indifference so widely spread in our age would lead us far beyond the proper limits of the present work. The first general cause was Semler's destructive criticism. The second has been the teaching, that morals must now take the place of religion. This conclusion agrees—it is said—with reason or common sense, and with all such parts of the Scriptures as are still allowed to remain valid.

Of Christian evidences supplied by the history of the Church, however defined, little was said in the days of Semler and Kant—as little of general history, as affording any evidences in favour of religion—still less of Christian biography, or of any such personal convictions as were asserted by Lavater, Claudius, and others of their school.

The argument, therefore, by which it was popularly concluded that positive Christianity must be rejected, was one that might be easily understood by everybody. The historical Scriptures contained, it was said, statements that had been shown to be highly improbable; and therefore positive religion—so far as it was founded on the veracity of those Scriptures—must be abolished. It was added, that practical morals must, however, be retained. This is a summary of the positive results arrived at by the earlier deists and rationalists of the eighteenth century. Their teaching has on the whole been maintained by many later writers, whose common first principle is one asserting the sufficiency and the independence of morality. On the opposite side, it is affirmed that, although man has a capacity for accepting moral and religious truth, his actual or practical condition is such as to need the aid of a divine revelation.

The two assertions represent the two sides of a great controversy. There is, however, a position that may be called intermediate. It is one for the most part not unlike Kant's notion, that morality, though rightly independent, may for a time need the aid of religion. It follows, that when moral independence is restored, that aid may with advantage be taken away.

About the time 1770-90 the first of the three principles

here noticed—the assertion of moral independence—was very widely accepted.

In 1787 the idea of morality itself was purified and ennobled by Kant's chief work on ethics; but still the assertion of independence was strictly maintained. In 1793 followed his work on religion, in which the intermediate position was defined.

Between this position and such views as were held by Lessing, by Jacobi, and by Herder in his later years, the distance is not great.

In 1798 the principle of moral independence was boldly asserted by Fichte; but in 1806 he disowned the sufficiency of his earlier doctrine, and again, but more definitely, he disowned it in 1813.

Of such retractations as these—equivalent to a confession that in religion must be found the basis of moral order—little or nothing was apparently known or understood by Carlyle. He had found in the doctrine of moral independence a principle congenial with his own character; and he deplored the fact that men were for the most part still living in a state of moral anarchy. How could his own moral faith or philosophy be made prevalent? Meanwhile, there arose in his time a new school of philosophy, of which only the leading tendency—the general idea—can here be noticed; and this will be done most readily by way of contrast. In the old school, man's conscience was "all in all:" in the new school, history—especially the history of religion—was studied.

It has of course been noticed how, in Kant's teaching, we meet everywhere the notion of some hopeless, absolute separation. Nature and mind—morality and religion—practical reason, on one side, showing us that the idea of God must be true; on the other side the understanding, showing us that his existence can never be proved—these are examples of Kant's "oppositions of science." Against their finality the new philosophy entered a protest, and then went on to show how a union of thought and faith

might be restored. Of all the results of this new philosophy—belonging to our own century—one may be chiefly noticed here.

Little was said by Kant respecting the history of religion, or of the Christian Church, regarded as an historical institution. On the other hand it has been maintained by Schelling and Hegel that, if religion belongs essentially to the mind of man, it must also belong to the history of mankind; if it has ideal truth it must also have real and historical truth. It follows, that if Christianity, after its life of nearly nineteen centuries, may be regarded as a dream “vanishing at daybreak,” in the next place, nature herself may be so dismissed, and man must be left destitute of all guidance save that which can be afforded by his own private judgment. Mankind have not been left thus destitute of religion. Throughout all the religions that have existed in the world there has been traced the progress of one idea—an idea of union existing between God and man. This idea is realized in Christianity.

Early in the present century, Schelling and Hegel suggested this new theory of religion. The absolute separation of the human and the divine had long been a principle assumed; this was now denied; and consequently it was granted that the central idea of the Christian religion—a union of the Divine with the human—was not one to be rejected as self-contradictory or impossible.

Meanwhile, Schleiermacher went on to show—first, that in the life of the Christian Church, the realization of this idea—a union of the Divine with the human—had taken place; secondly, that the union had always been maintained by means of faith in one Person, Divine and human; thirdly, that the historical fact of his existence must, therefore, always be maintained as the central fact of Christianity.

Partly aided by the spread of Hegel’s philosophy—as understood by the “right side” of his school—but still more aided by the teaching of Schleiermacher, some considerable restoration of Christian belief took place

during the first thirty years of the present century. This assertion must, however, be understood as having an especial reference to men of high culture, of whom many were professors in universities. Among the people, the sweeping negations of the earlier rationalists remained still predominant. They reduced themselves to one popular argument which, to the present day, retains its force:—Religion is founded on the Scriptures of the Old Testament and the New; in these—as we are told—Semler and others have found many errors; consequently, the Christian religion must be altogether rejected. Here there is nothing that can be called abstruse; he that runs may read such an argument. Accordingly, the unbelief so founded has easily been made current among the people, and it remains still unaltered in the opinions of multitudes living in the present day. This important fact must be more largely noticed in another place. Here it is mentioned, in order to limit and define the practical importance to be ascribed to such new views of religion as may be called ideal or philosophical. Whatever their value may be, they cannot readily be made popular. At the same time, it is fair to add that—even in the present day, when all studies have become “practical”—this philosophical argument in favour of Christianity is one not to be forgotten.

The first position assumed in the ideal or philosophical argument may here be briefly given:—The cardinal ideas of Christianity—especially those respecting man’s fallen nature and his capability of restoration—are, it is said, profoundly true, and have been more or less recognized in all religions, of which Christianity is the culmination. To deny utterly then the substance of this last and “absolute religion,” is to ignore the whole meaning of history, and to make of man an enigma. This is the main position of Hegel’s religious philosophy.

However brought about, the fact is undeniable—that among the Protestants of North Germany, there took place in the first quarter of this century—almost simultaneously—

a transition in philosophy, and some considerable restoration of religious belief. In some instances, it might be rather called a distrust in the logical forms of their old unbelief.

However this might be, the result, as admitted by all parties, was apparent, that among professors and students in Universities there was spread—especially in the years 1820-30—a general respect for religion.

Schleiermacher, in his own way, was teaching a doctrine to the effect that our own human nature, when deeply studied, leads to an inquiry to which Christ alone can give the answer required.

Hegel—in terms more abstruse—was teaching a philosophy of religion of which the main result, as regards Christology, was—as he often declared—in substance identical with the doctrine of the Lutheran Church. This assertion, however, was accepted only by one party in his school, as a result agreeing with their own conclusions. Strauss, Feuerbach and others contended that Hegel's own teaching must lead to an opposite result.

Meanwhile, the argument that, strictly speaking, might be called “historical and critical,” had not been forgotten, though its interest had been made for a time subordinate. It was in substance neither more nor less than the old rationalistic syllogism:—Christianity bases its tenets on the Scriptures; in these we find errors; therefore the said tenets are not true.

This is the argument which here, for the sake of brevity, is called historical, though its data are partly supplied by biblical criticism—a department of learning in which an especial eminence was attained, in 1830-60, by F. Baur of Tübingen. His disciple, Strauss—who published in 1835 his book entitled the “Life of Jesus”—excited a new interest in the argument here called historical; and again, when it had partly lost its interest, it was revived by him in 1864, when he published the same work—greatly altered and indeed reconstructed.

It has been shown therefore, that—leaving for a moment

out of sight the early rationalism of Semler and his immediate followers, whose argument was mostly historical and critical—subsequent theories and their consequent discussions may be classified as ethical, ideal or philosophical, and historical.

Their chief practical results may now be briefly noticed. Among Protestants, the evidences called historical have been reconsidered, and to some extent well maintained, but with considerable modifications of their details. Among Catholics some able apologetical works have appeared, in which general evidences are well treated; but their main argument has always remained one that—as regards the position made most prominent—may be called ecclesiastical. They appeal chiefly to the continued life of the Church.

It is not implied here that, among the best and most learned of modern Protestant apologists, such evidences as are supplied by the continued life of the Church have been generally treated with anything like the neglect or contempt that was a characteristic of Semler's time. Among learned men of all schools, history is now respectfully studied.

The defence maintained by Protestant theologians—more or less orthodox—since 1835, and especially since 1864, has been made remarkable by two facts. On the one hand, many of the old rationalistic rejections of minor historical and scriptural evidences have been allowed; and thus some premisses claimed by old rationalism have been conceded: on the other hand, the main result—that the tenet of Christ's divinity should be also rejected—has not been generally allowed.

Strauss—who in his later destructive work was greatly aided by Bauer's theory—bases his later argument partly on the assumed fact, that of the New Testament Scriptures a very large proportion belongs to a time extending from the year 100 to 150; that is to say, coming down to as low a date as about 120 years after the resurrection. In the course of this time it is assumed, not only as possible but as highly probable, that facts and fictions might

become inextricably mingled. It is therefore contended, that of the first century—and especially of the first fifty years—there remains little that can be accepted as historical truth.

This last negation relates especially to the time where the chief interest of the whole controversy is concentrated—the time when the divinity of Christ was first proclaimed by his apostles—when they went forth boldly teaching that he had risen from the grave, had appeared to them, and had endowed them with spiritual authority and power.

Their teaching was followed—as all the world knows—by the rapid spread of Christianity in Rome, Greece, and Asia Minor. This vast and marvellous success is, of course, admitted as a fact by Strauss and Baur. Their chief endeavour is to show how that success may be accounted for without an appeal to any supernatural power.

Strauss supposes that, in the course of the time following that called Apostolic, and ending about the middle of the second century, a series of myths was gradually developed, and subsequently these myths were commonly accepted as historical facts.

Baur's theory supposes that, in the course of the Apostolic age, and afterwards, vehement conflicts of opinions and tendencies took place among the members of the Christian Church. They were divided, he says, into two parties, one mostly following Peter, James, and John; the other following Paul.

This notion of an early controversy—originally suggested by Semler—was developed by Baur into an elaborate theory, of which the following is an outline:—

The four epistles written by St. Paul and addressed respectively to the Galatians, to the Corinthians, and to Christians in Rome, afford evidence, says Baur, that the Christian Church, in the first century, was vexed and torn by controversy. One party would make it a narrow sect included within the boundary of Judaism; the other—led

by St. Paul—would expand it into a faith broad and strong enough to grasp and subjugate the whole world. The latter party gradually prevailed. This leading fact, or theory, is used as a key to explain the relations existing between several parts of the New Testament. It is asserted that St. Paul was viewed with suspicion and jealousy by the Petrine or Judaizing sect, and was condemned and persecuted as an innovator, if not as heretical. The “Acts of the Apostles,” we are told, were written with the purpose of reconciling the two parties, by ascribing equal honour to their two leaders, Peter and Paul, who were, therefore, both described as apostles sent to the Gentiles. It is maintained that this theory of an early controversy between a Narrow and a Broad Church is confirmed by the Book of the Apocalypse, written (it is supposed) by a member of the Judaizing party, while the fourth Gospel, described as belonging to the middle of the second century, is accepted as a proof that, at that time, the Pauline and Catholic version of the original Gospel had finally prevailed over the doctrine of the narrow party. Again, the theory is made use of to explain the differences found in the two Gospels of Matthew and Luke. The former, we are told, was written with a Judaizing tendency, while the latter was Pauline in its intention. After studying this Tübingen theory, one reflection seems almost inevitable:—if the original Light, thus described as shining in its time of dawn, through surrounding mists and clouds of doubt and controversy, could, nevertheless, penetrate all the darkness of the following centuries, and could spread itself over so great a portion of the Roman world, how bright must that original Light have been in itself!

Strauss and Baur alike maintained some reserve in their replies to one question often addressed to them. It was suggested, that they should give some clear and probable account respecting the early spread of Christian belief and doctrine; especially its spread in the time immediately

preceding the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, and in the time following, of which some accounts are preserved in the writings of St. Paul.

One fact more or less established by the four epistles already named was indeed most industriously studied by Baur. The apostle found among the Christians of his time some obstinate cases of a rather strict adherence to Judaizing rites and practices, and against these he wrote several earnest admonitions. True; but this single fact tells us very little of St. Paul's own belief, and as little of the Christian belief which in many places he confidently assumes, or takes for granted, as a faith already existing—unquestioned, and established, to say the least, for some years previous to his writing—among those to whom his epistles are addressed. He writes to them as to men whose faith had for some time been in substance identical with his own. Their Christology—their doctrine respecting Christ—is thus supposed to have been a faith established without dispute, and for some years previous to the dates of his epistles.

Especially must this pre-supposition of their early faith be noticed as regards the Christians of Rome—including both Jews and Gentiles—whom the Apostle had not visited at the time of his writing to them. It has hardly been questioned, that he died about the year A.D. 64. The accepted date of the Epistle to the Romans is A.D. 58. As St. Paul supposes, or takes for granted, there was at that time already established in Rome a Christian Church including members so far advanced in faith and knowledge that he could address to them such a chapter as the eighth of that epistle.

This one reference to a sure fact in the history of the Church may serve to indicate the existence of many similar facts, and to show the strength of the general position maintained in the defence of early Christianity against all the combined attacks of Strauss and Baur.

The elaboration of myths—the development of tendencies,

or theories—the “inventions” made in a later time—these can give no fair account of a common or general belief, established in several places, and in the course of some twenty-five years after the resurrection. The belief then accepted included a belief in the divinity of Jesus Christ.

The question may be still more closely limited, as regards the main facts rejected by Strauss, and for the most part ignored by Baur—especially the fact of the resurrection.

In the course of a few years—say ten or twelve at the utmost—there took place a series of marvellous events—beginning with the Crucifixion and ending, say, soon after the conversion of Saul of Tarsus—events by which the destinies of the whole world have been changed. If the facts asserted by St. Paul—or assumed as facts well known—are rejected, then what were the events that really did take place in the course of that time?

No reasonable account has been given by Strauss—no clear reply to this fair challenge.

Baur, respecting those events and the marvellous effects that so soon followed, has indeed little to say. He turns away from facts, and goes on weaving his theory of a Church—a Christian Church, that arose out of a quarrel!

How was the Gospel *first* spread? This is the question, to which Strauss and Baur give no clear answer.

The historical argument—to be developed on both sides more elaborately in some later pages—has here been briefly sketched, chiefly for the purpose of showing its relation with evidence afforded by ethical inquiry, and with the evidence adduced by religious philosophy.

The collected force of these three bodies of testimony cannot be fairly described as a mere accumulation of evidence. The point to be chiefly noticed is, not the quantity of the evidence, but the fact of its *convergence*. The three lines of the evidence—drawn from three points distant from one another—converge, and meet in one point.

The importance of this conclusion will be suggested, if for a moment a contrary supposition be entertained. Let it

be imagined, that the historical argument—as already indicated—still remains intact; but that the ethical evidence has seriously failed. In other words, let it be supposed, that by the introduction of moral and social measures—and without the aid of any religion—many nations have, since the Christian era, been made virtuous, happy, and prosperous. Further let it be supposed, that since that era, the ancient religions of Greece and Rome, and the religious institutions of Judaism have still survived, and still remain in a flourishing condition—that is to say, retaining such moral, social, and political strength as they possessed in their best period of history.

For a moment, let these suppositions—though they are mere dreams—be accepted as facts. In this case it is obvious, that some parts of the evidences described as convergent will be lost. It will not appear now, that Christianity was a revelation morally and urgently needed just at that time when it first appeared. The ethical evidence will, therefore, lose much of its force.

Again, if at that time the Roman world was not in a state of incipient dissolution, a considerable part of the evidence afforded by the philosophy of history must be lost.

But the suppositions are all false. The converging evidences are true. They are as rays of light, becoming brighter as they approach their common centre.

True, vital, and authoritative ethics belong to Christianity, and when we trace them back to their source, we are led to one time and to one place. This, in few words, is the ethical argument in favour of Christianity.

The apostles went forth and preached, boldly declaring facts that to multitudes seemed incredible; nay, impossible. Yet their message was accepted as a Gospel long though dimly sought for by many souls, among the enslaved and broken-hearted subjects of Rome. That message was a Gospel of true and universal freedom—a declaration that by Christ all men were to be made free.

"Freedom for all"—such words had never before been heard in the Roman world. No wonder then—as sceptics have remarked—that there were found among the slaves so many Christian converts. It should be also remarked how closely at that time slavery was "built in"—so to speak—with the basis and with the whole superstructure of society. A sudden and general liberation of slaves would have led to a universal social ruin. Freedom was given by the Gospel; but the gift was first of all a spiritual and moral liberty. This accepted—it was inevitable that social and political freedom would follow.

The conversion of many slaves makes it clear, that Christianity was spread partly by natural and ordinary means—*i.e.* by appeals to human sympathies and motives. Still the question remains:—Whence the idea of universal freedom? How was it conceived and developed at such a time?—Clearly, it was proclaimed on the ground of faith in Christ, and submission to his authority. But whence that faith—that submission?—His real or merely human character—says Strauss—was exalted by the imagination of his disciples; they ascribed to him divine attributes.

The question returns, though now in another form:—Why so zealously—so often when meeting death face to face—did they maintain their faith—their absolute devotion?—"Fictions magnified the truth," says Strauss. But whence came the first impulse of the movement that—at the time when those so-called "fictions" were spread—really did spread itself over the Roman world?

The true answer—given directly in the Gospel—is strongly suggested by a deep study of Roman civilization as it existed in the first century. Bensen—a writer whose special study was ancient slavery—has forcibly described that civilization. For obvious reasons, his words—though just—cannot here be given in the form of a literal translation:—

"What now was there left existing in the State that could offer any efficient opposition to the universal spread

of [the grossest immorality] ? Was there any moral strength still left in the State itself ? . . . The subjected provinces were but so many parishes or close boroughs, so to speak, where freedom and moral life were crushed under a despotic power of centralization. The State alone was everywhere present, and as the centre was corrupt, its depravity was spread throughout the whole of the empire. As a rule, it may be said the provinces most remote from Rome were the least corrupt. In others there remained only vestiges of their earlier morals and their religions. The latter—founded on venerable traditions—had once been powerful, and had greatly aided in maintaining the order of society. Each of these religions had however an authority that was merely national ; of a religion “for all men,” or of “freedom for all,” there existed hardly an idea in the whole Roman world. In proportion as each nationality declined, so passed away its religion. Shrines once venerable were now made ridiculous ; their oracles were despised ; the gods, attired in grotesque habits, appeared on the stage to excite laughter ; and even the sanctity of vestals failed to secure respect.”

“Could philosophy do nothing for the restoration of public morality ?—Philosophy in all ages has held a retired and abstract position ; has served well for the culture of a few select minds ; but has had little or nothing to say to the people, and has certainly done little or nothing to improve their moral condition. In the depth of Roman degradation there existed still some stern precepts of moral philosophy ; but they existed mostly in books, and were not exemplified in life.”

“In practical life there prevailed now over all law and virtue one violent passion—a thirst of acquisition. ‘Rem, quocunque modo, rem’—this was the universal maxim. Wealth must be got. Those who could grasp it ruined themselves by luxury ; those who could not, were ruined by oppression. For the most part, men—whether rich or poor—were in one respect equal ; they no longer existed as men.

The rich buried themselves in sensuality ; the poor—treated as senseless things, existing only to be made useful—were left to perish when they had worn themselves out.”

“It was a world—a chaos—of moral desolation. And in such a time—surrounded by such a world in ruins—Christianity suddenly arose. Once more light appeared, shining over a chaos, out of which a new world was to be called into existence. The facts accompanying the revelation were such as must be referred to a Divine Power. To One who thus called a new world out of a moral chaos must be ascribed a perfect union with the Supreme Power who, in the beginning, ‘created man in the likeness of God.’—For those who still reject this truth, there can exist no authority in universal history.”

Ethical inquiries have led chiefly to one question. Historical inquiry and religious philosophy, founded on universal history, both lead to the same question :—Can the events of the first century, and their results, be ascribed to any power and authority merely human ; or less than Divine ?

The confessed failure of ethical philosophy—the moral doctrine of Kant, and this considered chiefly with regard to its independence—has led us on to study a religious philosophy, founded on the facts of universal history ; and the conclusions of this philosophy are such as strongly support the historical evidences of Christianity. There—in the first century of the Christian era—is the time when the old world was passing away, and when events were rapidly tending toward a violent disruption of society. Then was most urgently required a movement that should at once be ethical, religious, and authoritative ; but where was the power by which such a vast movement could be initiated ? That ethical maxims, incomparably pure and sublime, were then spread widely, and especially were made known to the common people of Galilee and Judæa—that several circumstances favourable to the spread of information were then co-existent—and that a school of philosophy, not

adverse to the idea of a new revelation, existed at Alexandria—these are facts respecting which there is no dispute. But how far can such facts serve to make clear the source—the power—the success of the Christian revelation? How far can those circumstances of the time make logical or consequent—as ordinary effects of ethics or philosophy—the events attending the early spread of the Gospel, and all the great results that have followed? Can those facts serve fairly as substitutes for our belief—“*Descendit Deus, ut assurgamus*”?

The philosophy of history assures us, that neither ethics nor any theory of religion, however sublime, can lead to such results. The attempt to found a real and practical religion on the sole basis of moral doctrine must be a failure. Power must create authority; and authority must be required to make Christian ethics practical. Morality cannot found a religion; but moral evidence—beginning with the confessed failure of ethical philosophy—should lead us on to the study of historical evidence.

There is in our conscience a moral law; and it points to the existence of a Lawgiver. So far Kant has led us; but his teaching—if self-consistent—must lead us on further—must point to historical facts.

If we inquire benevolently and earnestly—if we seek guidance, not for ourselves alone, but “for all men”—we must seek for a revelation that will make commonly known such moral rules as are at once clear and special, as well as general—above all, such rules as are indisputable and authoritative. And it is right, says Kant, that we should practically accept Christianity as if it were really a Divine revelation capable of historical demonstration.

It has been shown that this answer—qualified by those remarkable words “as if”—is not satisfactory. To accept the law, we must first admit the authority of the Lawgiver. To accept the revelation as our moral guide, we must accept also its historical evidences.

We are thus led on to a better philosophy. We are now

taught, that as surely as there exists a will earnestly seeking for truth, so surely exists the truth that may be found. This is assumed by the great apostle St. Paul, as the basis of his reasonings, in the introduction of his Epistle to the Romans.

Moral inquiry leads us to historical research. The lines of inquiry—one moral, the other historical—are distinct; at the same time, they are convergent. Together they lead us toward one conclusion—the historical truth of our religion.

To this conclusion we have been guided—though imperfectly and indirectly—even by Kant, who, as far as was possible, maintained the independence of morality. So long as he thinks only of the individual—of himself, in fact—he is contented with such guidance as he finds in his own independent conscience; but when he contemplates the moral wants of the whole world—when he would appeal to one central authority to which “all men owe allegiance,” he is compelled to own that Christianity alone can rightfully demand universal obedience.

This doctrine is declared, more boldly and more clearly, by Fichte, in his *later* writings. The same truth is maintained by both Schelling and Hegel, as the final result to which they have been led by the philosophy of history and religion. In a word, Christianity is—they say—“the absolute religion.” In substance it can never change; the laws of its progressive movement are contained within itself; and its capability of expansion is infinite.

Hence it follows, that Christianity must be regarded, for the future, as the supreme controlling power in every truly social or humanitarian movement. The philanthropy of the eighteenth century cherished some designs that in themselves were good; but they failed. Why?—For want of the Divine aid which religion might have afforded. Those designs are not forgotten, though cautious men are now disposed to say little of the ideas that, near the close of the eighteenth century, led men on to a revolutionary delusion.

The same optimistic ideas are still prevalent among large classes—especially in France and Germany—and the danger of delusion has not yet passed away.

The fact is made apparent by one argument, not unfrequently urged in these days by representatives of social democracy. "The social principles," they say, "that we are now maintaining, may fairly be called Christian. In past ages, these principles have with great benefit to society been reduced to practice; and this has been done on a very large scale."

There are occasions when it is especially important, that not only the truth, but "the whole truth" should be spoken. Here the "principles" referred to may be found—we are told—"in the Canon Law of the Catholic Church." This is not a question to be discussed here. The one point to be noticed in this "social-democratic declaration" is simply the fact of omission—omission of all reference to religion.

Granting for a moment that the principles in question were formerly reduced to practice, it must be remarked that this was done in the establishment of confraternities called especially "religious." They were established, not only under the general sanction of religion, but under the special sanctions of certain Christian precepts, which in this case were, in the first place, interpreted with the utmost possible rigour and, secondly, were accepted as special rules—not enforced at first by any authority, but chosen by those who could yield a voluntary obedience. It is true that in submission to such laws or principles, millions of men once lived together in contented poverty; but to contend that this which was then done, and with the aid of religion—certainly under its sanction, then not doubted—can now be done, without the aid of religion, and in a society not recognizing any religious sanction—this among all the results of false reasoning must be called the most absurd. The argument, reduced to its most abstract form, is hardly better than saying, a is true; but x is contrary to a ; and therefore x is true.

Of optimistic ideas, suggesting hopes of a brighter future, the best that can be said is this : that something like them—more probably something better—may some day be realized, *with* the aid of true, historical, and practical Christianity. It will not be done without such aid.

If the world is to be improved, it will be by men who do not worship the world. The ideal and the real have been set in opposition ; but this is only one among the numerous “oppositions of science falsely so called.” The best beginning for a reformation of this world is to believe in another.

Devotion to the highest common interests of humanity must demand the self-sacrifice of many individuals. To animate and encourage them, materialism and “positivism”—the acme of negation—can say but little. Why—or for whose sake—should martyrs “spurn delights, and live laborious days?” They must first believe and love ; or they cannot hope. The man of wide sympathies must feel at times a deep discouragement—surely if he lives in times like our own—when he surveys the past, and sees how slow has been the progress made by those who have devoted their labours—their lives—to establish and extend here a kingdom that still is hardly visible. But he retains his faith in the unseen world, and consequently his hope of a better, brighter world to be some day made visible here. There is an ideal light—shining out from that light which “was the light of men”—still shedding radiance over the gloom of this real world ; and in this light the true philanthropist sees hopeful signs, even where science can “prove” that no rational ground of hope exists.

Take away faith and hope ; and let the world’s reformation be made wholly dependent on calculations of “self-interest”—however “well understood”—then recurs the old problem of Bentham’s philosophy :—how to find here “the greatest possible happiness.” How shall it be solved?—Men like Kant and Fichte will doubtless still maintain their own independence, controlled only by their own superior moral

will; and men like Carlyle will treat the question with contempt; but the majority of men will find some plausibility in the solution proposed by Helvetius in 1758, and accepted as law by multitudes living in his time :—"Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die."

The practical alternative for society has on one side Christianity; on the other materialism and sensualism. This general practical result agrees with the conclusions to which men of high intelligence—Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel, to say nothing of others—have been led by their independent study—especially by their philosophy of history and religion. The whole of their teaching is not accepted when these—their conclusions respecting ethics and religion—are cited as deserving attention. Here are the thoughts of men whose "freethinking" has not been very closely restricted by any Christian prejudices; and in this respect their conclusions are the more worthy of notice.

That moral laws not based on religion are, for a vast majority of mankind, destitute of authority, and therefore powerless; that now, throughout the Western world, the only possible religion must be Christian; that the political freedom, more and more widely spreading, is simply inevitable—is in fact a result of Christian civilization—yet must lead on to anarchy, if not controlled by religion; that so far the highest benefits have been conferred on society under the sanction of the Christian religion, which has moreover excited the highest hopes of future progress; that these hopes may be realized with the aid of religion, but never can be without it—these are conclusions very remarkable as results of free philosophical inquiry.

Since the days of Kant, still larger concessions have been made by religious philosophy. Throughout the whole course of history there has been traced, we are told, the evolution of ideas leading nearer and nearer to those revealed, or made clearly manifest, in the Christian religion. In other words, the philosophy of history has utterly rejected the dogmas of deism; and has returned, so to

speaking, to recognize as consonant with speculative views the leading ideas of Christianity.

Morality, says Hegel—in accordance with Fichte—cannot be a substitute for religion. Men will never be wholly guided either by pure intellect, or by abstract moral precepts. Religion—worship of some kind—essentially belongs to human nature; and if men cease to worship God, they will turn, some few to worship genius and beauty, others—a vast majority—to worship the world and obey their own passions.

Man has not been left solitary, to seek that which does not exist. His need of religious aid has been supplied by a revelation, in which the questions arising out of his own conscience find their true answers. Such answers have been given neither by deism nor by pantheism: the former separates for ever our human nature from the Divine; the latter would lead—were it possible—to an adoration of the universe, and to a confusion of all ethical ideas. On the ground of these theories, the questions that throughout the whole course of history have occupied the attention of men—especially those most thoughtful and conscientious—must all be dismissed as idle or absurd.

Thus, while religion is rejected, the common sense of mankind in all ages is treated with contempt. The absolute separation made in the theories of deism and pantheism, between man and his Creator, is, says Hegel, the greatest of all possible errors, and sets itself in opposition to the testimony of the whole world. In Christianity we find the truth—corresponding at once with man's deepest consciousness of his own sinful nature, and with his hope of restoration to communion with God.

These conclusions—viewed as concessions made on the part of philosophy—are highly remarkable, and must in the sequel be more largely considered. In this place they have served to confirm our position: that in modern controversy—especially since the time of Fichte—though biblical criticism has raised many minor doubts, the three lines of

evidences—ethical, philosophical, and historical—have converged; so that more and more clearly it is seen now, that all three have been tending toward one point, a recognition of truth in the central tenet of Christianity. About half a century ago, such a result was almost clearly predicted, in words already quoted (pp. 11-12).

Here—where our analyses of ethical theories are ended—philosophy and theology, with all the literature directly connected with religion, must for a time be dismissed. There remains to be noticed the general literature—especially the poetry—of the years 1770-1805, a time remarkable as the classic period of German poetry, and mostly studied with regard to its æsthetic culture. Here its moral and religious characteristics will be especially noticed.

The transition from controversy to poetry is not as abrupt as at first sight it may appear. Poetry has a most intimate union with religion. Teaching, though divested of all religious forms, may still be religious. On the other hand, light literature, having no direct reference to religion, may be more pernicious than any direct opposition to faith or morality. In 1770-1800, where the writings of some philosophical deist—English or French—might find some scores of readers, Wieland, the poet and novelist, could find hundreds, especially among the higher classes.

The force of these general remarks will be seen, when we go on to notice the transition that took place in poetical taste, in the days of Klopstock and Wieland.

CHAPTER XI.

POETRY.—KLOPSTOCK.—WIELAND.

IN the time 1770-1800 there took place in general literature—especially in poetry—a movement of transition, as remarkable as the progress made in the same time by rationalism. This is one of several facts cited now and then to support a well-known theory—that in every period remarkable for its transitional character the general literature of a people more or less represents their history during the same time. There is some truth in the conclusion; but it is one that must not be accepted too widely. The distinct traits of various classes of people, and those of various localities must be considered; and the millions who do not read, or have but little culture, must not be forgotten. The literature of an age may be shallow, or sectarian; and therefore may tell us little respecting the people.

In our accounts of rationalism and negative philosophy, nothing has been said respecting their spread in the South of Germany. The reason is obvious; there is little or nothing to be said. There were indeed, in the South, some movements of an innovating tendency; but for the most part they might be described as political and ecclesiastical. In 1763 appeared the book “*De statu ecclesiæ*,” written by J. N. von Hontheim, Bishop of Trier, but published under the disguise of a pseudonym—Febronius. Two years later, its doctrine—a defence of the Gallican system in ecclesiastical government—was for the most part retracted by the author.

In Bavaria, and elsewhere in the South, the secret society of the “*Illuminati*,” founded by Weishaupt, was at one

time spread rather widely. Its principles—disguised by a strange terminology—were mainly those of the French Revolution. But secret societies—especially Freemasons' Lodges—were spread with far greater success in North Germany, and included among their members many men of note in literature. It was an open secret, that the chief object of many of these societies was a social reformation, based upon principles not unlike those prevalent in France. Yet it must not be understood that, to any considerable extent, there were entertained ideas or designs leading toward a violent disruption of society.

If the word "revolutionary" might be employed with a force much subdued, it would serve well to denote the general current of thought and feeling in Germany throughout the latter half of Klopstock's life. He himself, when sixty years old, was numbered among those who expected that in France would first be seen the dawn of a political millennium. In this there was nothing remarkable. The poet—"old-fashioned" in his religious creed—accepted in other respects the creed of the time—a time when the Emperor Joseph II was predicting for Europe "a universal peace." As regards politics, faith, and literature, the tendencies of the age had one basis. It was generally supposed that an erroneous belief respecting human nature had too long prevailed. A new belief—more hopeful—was now made the basis of a new philosophy.

Wieland was a man, comparatively speaking, insignificant. His mind was for the most part imitative. It is not to be understood that he began any new æsthetic movement in literature; the transition most noticeable in his time was made by younger men. Yet it is true that, in his early life, and with deliberate intention, he renounced the old faith and declared himself a teacher of the new. "All the evils of society," said he, "have arisen out of tyranny and superstition." He next went on to show, that neither faith nor authority was now required for the true education of mankind; on the contrary, what was most needed was freedom

—a freedom so wide that narrow-minded men would, no doubt, call it licence.

The younger poetical men of his time did not accept generally Wieland's artistic notions of poetry. To suppose that they did so would be far from the truth. But it is true, that Wieland was almost the earliest of those who proposed that, for the future, all connection of general literature with Christianity should be severed; it was determined in his day that poetry and art should be "non-Christian." The general character of the time, when "æsthetic culture" claimed supremacy, was first indicated—so far as religion and morality were concerned—when Wieland—renouncing his early pietism—suddenly changed the moral tone of his writings. Klopstock was now left—almost alone—to represent the old school, and so rapid was the progress made by the new school that his epic poem, the "Messias," was almost forgotten soon after the time (1773) when its publication was completed. "The men of genius"—led on by Klinger and others—now asserted their independence and freedom—in tones too violent to be allowed in the present day. They too often remind one of Caliban's wild ejaculations respecting his own anticipated emancipation.

The general character of the new poetical literature produced in the course of the time 1770-1800 is fairly indicated by the words once made use of by Goethe in 1782. He described his own belief at that time as "not anti-Christian" [in a polemical sense] "but decidedly non-Christian."

It is not intended that a word should be said here to defend the error of narrow pietism—the notion that all poetry should be made directly subservient to religion. Indirect services are too often underrated. True and pious sentiments may be communicated without the use of any words usually called "sacred." Tones hardly definable may express deep and true thoughts and feelings. The power of indirect teaching is too little understood; and too often badly employed. In our day, vice, when suggested,

is mostly suggested in an indirect way ; and the same may be said of practical atheism. On the other side, feelings of repulsion are too often excited by poetry called “ sacred,” of which the leading trait is a familiar use of words that ought to be sacred.

In the criticism of poetry, great caution is requisite when its moral and religious character is chiefly noticed. Verse made formally “ sacred ”—mostly by an iteration of certain words—is too abundant ; while poetry having the true tone of Christianity is comparatively rare. For obvious reasons, hymns written for use in the public worship of various congregations are here left unnoticed.

For the rest—among the best productions of English poetry written since the days of Pope, how little is found of a kind that may be described as directly Christian. Pope’s best religious passages are theistic. The same description applies to the three celebrated hymns in blank verse written respectively by Milton, Thomson, and Coleridge. In the classical “ *Elegy*,” written by Gray, there is little that can be distinctly called Christian. The ethos of Wordsworth’s poetry is something far higher than morality, and its prevalent tone is devotional ; yet this great poet omits, for the most part, sentiments distinctly Christian. They are indeed expressed freely in the verses beginning thus—

“ Not seldom, clad in radiant vest,
Deceitfully goes forth the Morn.”—

But these verses are exceptional among his poems. Here are the traits called distinctly Christian. Of all those traits the chief is that pronounced by Cowper, in the following lines :—

“ There lives and works
A soul in all things, and that soul is God.
The beauties of the wilderness are His.
. . . . One Spirit—His
Who wore the platted thorns, with bleeding brows—
Rules universal nature.”

In poetry of the highest class, we often find the general

truth expressed in the first three lines ; but how rarely do we read the distinct Christian truth expressed in the latter lines !

These prefatory remarks suffice to show the general intention of the analyses that follow. General literature—above all, poetry—has in relation to faith and morals, an *indirect* influence that is powerful, whether for good or for evil. Our aim is to interpret the indirect teaching of a literature that, in one respect, is more important than all theology and philosophy. Even in Germany, how few are the readers who know much of the warfare so long maintained between these two studies !

Our following notices of poets and some other writers will show how rationalism has been aided by general literature. There is, however, something on the other side to be noticed.

All that has followed was clearly predicted when Klopstock—a Christian poet, at least in intention—was soon forgotten, and when Wieland so rapidly gained popularity by means of frivolity.

In order to appreciate fairly the work of a man's life, we must know something of his own time and of the preceding age. The "Messias" is no longer read ; but the author's name holds a prominent place in the history of German Literature. A brief reference to that history may indicate some characteristics of the time when he was hailed as an epic poet deserving a place on a level with Milton.

A long time of dulness had hardly passed away when, in 1748, the first three cantos of the "Messias" appeared. In the seventeenth century, Opitz had introduced a better style of writing verse ; and we see a later improvement in many of the hymns afterwards written for the services of the Lutheran Church. The study of English Literature produced good results in the eighteenth century ; but they were more apparent in prose than in verse. Gottsched, the arch-critic of his time, deserved praise for putting down "the Second Silesian School"—the school of bad taste. Another

critic, Bodmer, deserved higher praise. He made a distinction between verse-writing and poetry, while he commended the power and freedom of English poetry, and endeavoured to restore to life the best productions of old times. Such services to national literature must not be forgotten, though they were mostly confined to theory. Bodmer was awaiting the arrival of the poet who would convert the new poetical theory into a reality, when suddenly Klopstock appeared—

“ [Bright] as a star, when only one
Is shining in the sky.”

For several young versifiers who were his contemporaries some diminutive term kinder than “poetaster” might be found. They studied the rules of versification, and introduced improvements in the forms of poetry; but their themes were too often trite sayings on “friendship, wine, and the beauties of nature,” and in all their variations there was but little variety.

Neither the current poetical literature, nor the prevalent creed, or rather doctrine, of the age could afford aid to a young poet's inspirations. Rationalism, imported from England, had reduced religion to a code of common-place ethics, as clear as any frosty day in winter—and as cold. It could supply neither faith as a basis for epic, nor enthusiasm as a source of lyrical poetry. There may be found, even in the hymns written by Gellert, some traces of the prosaic tone prevalent in his time. His devotional poems, though good in their own style, do not express the faith and fervour of an earlier psalmody. These notices may indicate some characteristics of the time when the earlier cantos of the “Messias” appeared.

FRIEDRICH GOTTLIEB KLOPSTOCK, born (2nd July, 1724) at Quedlinburg, enjoyed the advantages of a good classical training at Schulpforte, one of several Saxon schools endowed with the funds of suppressed convents and called “the Princes' Schools.” He studied theology at Jena and Leipzig, 1745-6. When he went to Leipzig, a literary union

called the Saxon School had been formed there, including several young men whose friendship—founded on congenial tastes in literature—was one of the most pleasing characteristics of the time. In a journal called the “*Bremer Beiträge*,” which served as the literary organ of their school, the first three cantos of the “*Messias*” appeared anonymously in 1748; but the author’s name was soon made known. Bodmer declared, that the poet whose coming had long been desired, had at last appeared, and Klopstock was hailed with an enthusiasm which in our times seems almost incomprehensible. In 1751 he received from Count Bernstorff an invitation to the Court of Denmark. On his way to Copenhagen, the young poet stayed for a while in Hamburg, and there met the lady—the “*Cidli*” of his poetry—whom he married in 1754. Her death (1758) was the one deep sorrow of his life. A moderate pension, granted in 1771, liberated him from domestic anxieties, and his quiet routine of life at Copenhagen and Hamburg was varied by visits to his native town and other places, including Karlsruhe, where he stayed for some time (1776) with his friend the Margrave of Baden.

In religion the writer of the “*Messias*” was a man of the old school. He loved the Bible, and believed in it as a record of the highest inspiration given to man. He felt no sympathy with the enlightened men of Berlin; but in politics he had a childlike faith in progress, and therefore hailed, in patriotic odes, the American War of Independence and the early proclamations of the French Revolution. “*Forgive me, O ye Franks!*” he says, in one of these odes, “*if I ever cautioned my countrymen against following your example; for now I am urging them to imitate you.*” He was about sixty years old when he wrote thus, but he lived long enough to find all his hopes of a peaceful reign of freedom disappointed. As a reward for faith once reposed in promises of a speedily-coming Utopia, he was elected (1792) a member of the National Convention. It should be added that loyalty and a love of rational freedom were

both asserted in his patriotic odes, as, for example, in one where he says—with reference to Friedrich II—

“The patriot who loves freedom may revere
A father on the throne.”

The declining years of the poet's life were passed in quietude at Hamburg. He could look back with pleasure on the period of youth and middle life; for, though he was not an ascetic pietist, his life had accorded well with his own belief, that the practice of a literary man should be in harmony with his teaching. He had endeavoured to banish the notion of treating poetry as a plaything. For him it was a sacred vocation, and he always remembered that he had written the “Messias.”

After a long life, cheered by the society of many good friends, he died at Hamburg, May 14th, 1803, and was buried under the shade of a linden-tree in the churchyard of Ottensen, and close to the grave of his first wife. The great commercial port did not neglect to pay funeral honours to the poet who had so long been numbered with its citizens. All the bells of Hamburg and Altona were tolling, while more than a hundred carriages and thousands of mourners followed the hearse. The elegies written after the funeral were hardly as numerous as those that bewailed the earlier death of Gellert.

All that is now generally known of Klopstock is, that he wrote the “Messias,” a poem once highly praised and now almost forgotten. The change took place partly during the author's life-time. The beginning of the epic was a labour of love. The subsequent progress of the work was very slow. When ten cantos had appeared, there were many enthusiasts who could read through the epic. Goethe tells us, that one of his father's friends used to read through the first ten cantos once in every year, in the week preceding Easter. The wonder is lessened when it is added that he read hardly any other book. But in 1773, when the epic was at last ended, enthusiasm had died away. It had

become more and more apparent that the author had written without a plan. When he published the first three, he had made no provision for filling with interest twenty long cantos of hexameter verse.

The "Messias" does not represent all the work of the author's life. His genius shines out more clearly in his odes devoted to friendship, patriotism, and the adoration of God. Misled by his patriotism, the poet made a series of failures in his dramas, founded on legends of the old time of Hermann; and a similar criticism might be applied to the dramas on themes taken from the Bible. His writings in prose are represented by the "Republic of Scholars," a book directed, in part, against the severity of criticism and therefore welcomed by several young authors, including Goethe.

Klopstock's life and work should be estimated in their connection with the development of a national poetic literature. Great changes in thought and feeling took place during his life-time. The forms in which his genius expressed itself have partly become obsolete. How many other works, once celebrated, have passed away since the "Messias" first appeared! During the time of the author's youth, the critics Gottsched and Bodmer were enjoying a high reputation. When the epic was ended, Herder was talking of "a poetry in harmony with the voices of the peoples and with the whole heart of mankind." Goethe reduced a part of this vast theory to practice by writing "Götz von Berlichingen," a drama soon followed by other works of a sensational class, fairly represented, at last, in Schiller's first play, the "Robbers." Such were the changes that took place while the author of the "Messias" was still in the prime of life. In his green old age we find him still caring for literature, and on one occasion talking earnestly of poetry with Wordsworth.

The most obvious defect in the "Messias" is its want of plot and action. The first three cantos are introductory. The fourth gives a narrative of the conspiracy against

Jesus, and contains several long speeches, which are eloquent, and express a heartfelt devotion. The subsequent trial and the Crucifixion supply themes for the next six cantos. The remaining ten are confined to the period intervening between the Crucifixion and the Ascension. The events narrated are not enough to fill with poetic interest twenty long cantos of hexameter verse. To supply a want of action, long conversations of men and angels are freely introduced; but neither angels nor men have any true individuality. The best parts of the poem are its lyrical and descriptive passages. The epic—so-called—may indeed be fairly described as a series of conversations and descriptions with some fervid, lyrical interludes. Similes are very freely introduced, and, though often bold and original, are sometimes too far extended, as in the passage where Satan comes to tempt Judas. The approach of the fiend is thus compared to the coming of a pestilence:—

“ So, at the midnight hour, a fatal plague
Comes down on cities lying all asleep.
The people are at rest; or here and there
A student reads beside his burning lamp,
And, here and there, where ruddy wine is glowing,
Good friends are waking; some, in shadowy bowers,
Talk of their hopes of an immortal life—
None dreaming of the coming day of grief.” . . .

It is well conceived, that envy, the basest of all passions, is represented as the traitor's motive. A dream presents to Judas a false vision of rich, earthly domains to be divided among the favoured followers of the Master. Then the traitor's own allotment is described as—

“ A narrow, desolate tract of hills and crags,
Wild and unpeopled, overgrown with briars;
Night, veiled in chilly, ever-weeping clouds,
Hangs o'er the land, and in its barren clefts
The drifted snows of winter linger long;
There birds of night, condemn'd for aye to share
That solitude with thee, flit through the gloom
And wail among the trees with thunders riven.
That desert, Judas, is to be thine own!”

When the traitor has conceived his design, and resolved to execute it, the triumph of the tempter is thus described :—

. . . "With a silent pride,
Satan looked down upon him. O'er the flood
So towers some dreadful cliff, and from the clouds
Looks down upon the waves, all strewn with wrecks
And corpses." . . .

Bold similes are also introduced in the more subdued passages, as in the narrative of the journey to Emmaus. The mourning disciples meet a stranger who converses with them, and kindly, yet with energetic words, reproves their doubts and fears :—

"His words were like a storm that, while restrain'd,
Stirs not the far recesses of the wood ;
There in deep glades the pale-green shadows sleep,
For clouds have not yet blotted out the sun.
Thus for a time ; but soon with greater power
The Stranger speaks" . . .

"So through the forest blows
The storm, with all its strength in every blast ;
Now bend the trees, with quivering boughs all bend
Before the gale that drives on clouds of thunder,
And urges wave on billow o'er the ocean."

The rest of the canto from which the last quotation is taken may be referred to as containing, here and there, pleasing traits of description associated with expressions of pious feeling. But if isolated passages of descriptive power and lyric enthusiasm were more numerous, they could not make the "Messias" an epic worthy of its theme. The author failed where every poet, however great, must fail. The facts of the evangelical narrative admit no additions, while the thoughts transcend all poetry. Profound humiliation united with a calm assertion of boundless power ; predictions—called dreams—fulfilling themselves in defiance of the world ; kingdoms, empires, religions and philosophies fading away before the presence of One who was "despised and rejected of men"—here are wonders that can never be made more marvellous by any array of mythological imagery.

Epic poetry demands a union of idea and form ; in other words, it must express thoughts in action and external show, such as may captivate the attention of readers. But the theme chosen by Klopstock is the greatest possible antithesis of idea and form. As it has hitherto defied all the efforts of reasoning to bring it down to the level of commonplace history, so it asserts itself as independent of all such decorations as epic poetry can supply. It is no more a fit subject for epic poetry than for controversy ; but will evermore supply themes for the highest lyrical poetry—the poetry of the heart. This is the department of literature in which Klopstock was most successful.

His lyrical works include several hymns, and a number of more elaborate odes, written in alcaic, choriambic and other antique metres and without rhyme. The favourite subjects of the odes are mostly friendship, patriotism, and adoration of Creative Power. In some of his odes, contemplations of nature serve to introduce passages of fervid thanksgiving, like those found in the Hebrew Psalms, to which he was more or less indebted for inspiration in stanzas like this :—

“ Roar, Ocean ! to proclaim His praise,
Sing, rivers ! as ye flow ;
Ye forests, bow ! Ye cedar-trees,
Your lofty heads bend low ! ”

We cannot for a moment compare with such hymns as were written in the seventeenth century Klopstock's hymns, intended apparently for use in public worship. There is greater power in the odes of adoration ; but they are sometimes too long, and many passages are subjective. The poet refers too often to his own feelings, though the reference mostly expresses a profound humiliation. He too frequently confesses that he knows not what to say, as in the following stanza :—

“ When I would sing of Thee, Most High !
Where shall the theme begin ?—where end ?
What angel can the thoughts supply
That should with tones of thunder blend ? ”

The other stanzas of the ode consist mostly of a long simile in which the poet compares his own presumption with that of a mariner lost in an attempt to explore an unbounded ocean. Here the German poet and a Persian mystic meet, and both are possessed by one idea, when they speak of One before whom "the nations are counted as less than nothing and vanity." In concise energy of expression Jelaleddin has the advantage, at least in this couplet:—

"Earth, water, air and fire—LORD, in thy presence, none
Asserts itself; but all, in fear, lie down as one."

Among the odes devoted to friendship may be found—besides some weak sentimental specimens—several of a higher character; but their merits are so closely united with their antique metres that a fair translation is hardly possible. The following version of an ode entitled "Early Graves" may give the thoughts, and, perhaps the tone of the original:—

"Welcome, O moon, with silver light,
Fair, still companion of the night!
O friend of lonely meditation, stay,
While clouds drift o'er thy face, and pass away.

"Still fairer than this summer-night
Is young May-morning, glad and bright,
When sparkling dew-drops from his tresses flow,
And all the eastern hills like roses glow.

"O Friends, whose tombs, with moss o'ergrown,
Remind me, I am left alone,
How sweet to me, ere you were called away,
Were shades of night and gleams of breaking day!"

It has been said with some truth that Klopstock and Wieland were the antitheses of each other. The name of Wieland still holds a place in literary history, while his works, excepting his epic poem "Oberon," are almost forgotten. They have been praised mostly on account of an easy and fluent style; while their purport

has been censured by all critics who believe that true poetry and pure moral culture should be united.

CHRISTOPH MARTIN WIELAND, the son of a Lutheran pastor, was born in 1733, in a village near Biberach. Under his father's care, he received a good primary education, and afterwards continued his studies at the school of Kloster-Bergen (near Magdeburg), and at Erfurt and Tübingen. In the years 1749-52 he sketched for himself the outlines of all that wide and superficial knowledge of polyhistory which is found in his writings. In 1752 he went to Zürich, there stayed for some time with his friend Bodmer, and afterwards was engaged, for about five years, as a private tutor in two families. During this time he wrote rather extensively and in a sentimental, unreal tone, on religious subjects. A long passage of prose followed the poetry of his youthful years. During the interval 1760-69 he fulfilled the duties of town-clerk at Biberach; and there married a homely, domesticated woman. The prose of the nine years at Biberach was relieved by frequent visits to a neighbouring mansion at Warthausen, the residence of Count Stadion. Here the French tastes and manners of the time, the sciolism called enlightenment, and the epicurean teaching called philosophy were united for the seduction of Wieland, and the result of their combined attractions was a marvellous change of character. His tastes and talents were perverted. The youth, once so pious, in whom Bodmer had hoped to find a second Klopstock, now appeared as the writer of sceptical and epicurean stories. The results of his second course of education are found in a series of imaginative writings which may here be left for the most part unnoticed.

In 1769 he accepted the professorship of philosophy at Erfurt, where he remained until 1772. The duchess Anna Amalia then invited him to Weimar, where, until 1774, he was engaged as tutor to the young princes Karl August and Constantin. When the elder pupil had attained his majority,

Wieland received a pension with elevation in social position. All the rest of his life may be briefly described as a time of domestic repose protected from ennui by a literary productivity that could find no termination save in death. He established and conducted "the German Mercury," a review that had a great success (1773-89), and was followed by the "New German Mercury" (1790-95). Soon afterwards he began "the Attic Museum" (1796-1801), which was followed by the "New Attic Museum" (1802-10). Meanwhile he wrote, in prose and verse, various stories, didactic—in his own way—or fantastic, and too numerous to be named here. His writings (collected in 1818-28) fill fifty-three volumes. When fairly contrasted with all that he had to tell, his literary industry was enormous. In his later years he wrote on with unwavering perseverance, though the generation that had admired his early stories had ceased to live. The young men of the new generation were divided into two classes. On one side were those called innovators; on the other the men who were admirers of Klopstock. Both classes disliked Wieland. He had, they said, no original genius; he was no poet. This was the censure pronounced by the innovators, who described themselves as the sound and healthy children of nature—

. . . "As free as nature first made man,
When [wild] in woods the noble savage ran!"

The censure pronounced by the other party was more severe; for it had respect to the moral faults of his writings. It did not greatly disturb the repose that Wieland so long enjoyed at Weimar. Here, placed in easy circumstances, and surrounded by friends with whom he lived on good terms, he maintained his literary activity to an advanced age, and died in 1813.

The personal character of Wieland was morally respectable; and he was mostly regarded as an amiable man. These facts make the more remarkable the licentious traits

of his stories. In several of his writings he makes such a free use of irony that we are left in doubt respecting his intention. If we accept as serious many passages in his stories, we must come to the conclusion that a singular fixed idea had possession of his mind. He seems to have believed that a tendency to ascetic doctrine and practice was the prevalent error of his own times! To counteract that supposed tendency, he deliberately recommends doctrine and practice that may be called "epicurean" in the worst sense of the word. If he is ever earnest, it is in warning his readers of the unhappy tendencies of strict piety. He cannot forgive the teachers who led him to study in a severe school during his youth; and the object of several of his works is to expose the error of that school. In his poems, "Musarion" and "the Graces," he repeats, again and again, his censure of ascetic notions of virtue. "Musarion" tells the story of a youth who, by severe early discipline, is led to retire from society, but soon finds out that he is not well qualified for a hermit's life. In "The New Amadis" the difficulty of finding wisdom and beauty united in one person is playfully described, and the hero, after a vain search for such perfection, marries a plain and intelligent wife. This conclusion, however dull, is the most edifying part of the story, of which some details are treated with great licence. In "Agathon," a romance in prose, the writer is severe, but only against severity, and again denounces the stern doctrines impressed on his memory in early life. These are now represented by the teachings of an antique philosophy. Agathon, a Greek youth, is educated at Delphi, and afterwards lives at the court of Dionysius, where he learns to regard as impracticable all the moral theories of his early teachers.

Wieland's most artistic work—"Oberon," a romantic poem—has its scenes in the East and in Fairy Land. Three distinct stories are well united so as to form a whole; for each depends on the others. Goethe said: "As long as

gold is gold, and crystal is crystal, Oberon will be admired." On the other side, severer critics have described the poem as fantastic and destitute of strong interest. The author, it is said, treated mediæval legends and fairy tales in a superficial and ironical manner, and gained his popularity by assuming a light, mock-heroic style.

In his antique romance "The Abderites" (1774), Wieland made no pretence of describing life in ancient Greece, but employed an assumed antiquity as a veil for light satire on the petty interests and foibles of provincial life. The long account of the great law-suit at Abdera is the most amusing part of the story, and is as good as anything that he has written. He tells us that, in Abdera, there was only one surgeon-dentist, who had an extensive practice in the neighbourhood, and travelled, in a lowly fashion, from place to place. On one occasion, he hired an ass and its driver to carry his small baggage across a wide heath. It was a hot and bright summer's day; there was neither tree nor bush to cast a foot of shade anywhere, and the weary surgeon-dentist was glad to sit down and rest a while in the shadow cast from the figure of the ass. Against this appropriation of a shade the driver, who was also the owner of the ass, made a protest to the effect that he had sold the services of the ass and his own; but that nothing had been said in the bargain about any use of the shadow! The dentist must therefore either come out of the shade, or pay something extra for its use. As he refused to do so, a law-suit followed; the best lawyers of Abdera were employed on each side; both the claimant and the defendant were strongly supported by their respective friends, and the whole population of the town was soon divided into two parties, styled respectively, "Asses" and "Shadows."

Wieland was inspired by no lofty ideas of a poet's mission. The duty of a poet, as he understood it, was to amuse his readers, and to fulfil it he must be, in the first place, conciliatory; he must adapt both his subject and his style to

the fashion of his times. The taste of readers in the higher classes of society was still French when he began to write fictions. German literature must be changed, in order that it might be introduced to courts and to the higher circles. Wieland saw the necessity of this change, and while he wrote with gracefulness and vivacity, he extended greatly the range of topics found in light literature, and treated them in a style adapted to the tastes of the upper classes. For them the pious enthusiasm of Klopstock was tiresome, and they complained, not without cause, of his pompous and intricate style. No fault could be found in Lessing's style; but the great critic was a close thinker and wished to make his readers think also. This was in itself intolerable, and, moreover, he had the fault of refusing to write on such topics as the aristocracy cared for. Wieland understood their prejudices, and wrote to suit them. He had been educated under the influence of pietism; but he liberated himself from its restraints, and became as free in the treatment as in the choice of his subjects. This change in both style and purport took place so suddenly that it excited surprise. To use Lessing's words—"Wieland's muse made a sudden descent from heaven to earth!" It may be added, that his literary success was chiefly won by this bold transition.

On the other hand, his contributions to the culture of a literary style must not be forgotten. Many of his contemporaries were indebted to him for examples of lively and fluent writing. He extended the culture of literature in the southern states, and enlarged for many readers the boundaries of their imaginative world.

"Wieland," says Dr. Vilmar, "was the man of his time, for readers infected with the subtle and sweet poison of the French literature then current; especially for the higher classes, to whom thinking was tedious and enthusiasm ridiculous. To such people, who had formerly been dependent on the French, Wieland introduced a German

literature well suited to their taste, and it is merely by their interest in the materials of his works that we can now understand why he received, during his life, such praises as were hardly ever bestowed on Klopstock, and never on Lessing." This is only the lighter part of the critic's just reprobation of Wieland's moral tendencies.

CHAPTER XII.

GOETHE.

KLOPSTOCK wished to make poetry religious and national. Wieland was content if idle readers could find amusement in such fictions as he produced. The forms and laws of poetic art were defined by Lessing. Herder suggested a true idea of poetic inspiration, and gave some guidance to the expanding genius of Goethe. These were the chief events that in the course of the years 1770-94 led on to the development of a new poetical literature—the classic poetry of Goethe and Schiller.

About the time 1776, there lived at Weimar—a little city situated on the river Ilm, in Thuringia—a circle of literary men among whom were numbered Knebel, Wieland, Herder and Goethe. As far as regards his religious views, Herder was the most positive man of the circle. For the rest—it is not easy to give any precise account either of their belief or their unbelief. Their creed was small, and for the most part rationalistic. Knebel—at that time a materialist—translated the “*De Rerum Natura*” of Lucretius; and Goethe about the same time was thinking of writing some book more or less resembling that Epicurean poem. These were but ordinary signs of a wide-spread unbelief prevalent at Weimar as elsewhere. Independence and indifference are words that might, perhaps, better describe the position then assumed by Goethe and his friends. It was their aim to develop a free and æsthetic culture of poetry and general literature: the notion that their sole aim was a culture of “art for the sake of art” is an error.

Herder, when talking of poetry—especially of Hebrew

poetry—said many things that, as given in his own declamatory style, seemed vague; yet they were well understood on the whole by Goethe, and afforded considerable aid in the development of his poetic genius. He learned—partly through his own insight, partly by the aid of Herder's teaching—that true poetry is closely united with religion. This text he interpreted in accordance with his own so-called "pantheistic" views; and thus his poetic worship of nature was made a substitute for religion. It is not intended that this should be understood in an unqualified sense, or accepted as a fair summary of his creed. Indeed, no attempt will be made here to give any precise or complete account of his belief. It is the general, indirect tendency of his writings—above all his poetry—that must be especially noticed. So well known are the leading facts in his biography, that in this place a rather bare outline may suffice. He lived so long that he was acquainted with the men of three generations. He began his studies in the time of the Seven Years' War; he was writing his autobiography during the War of Liberation, and was studying zoology when the July revolution took place.

JOHANN WOLFGANG GOETHE, the son of parents who belonged to the wealthy section of the middle class, was born at Frankfurt am Main, 28th August, 1749. All the domestic circumstances in which he passed his time of boyhood were happy; and his mother was a remarkably cheerful and genial woman. His visits to the theatre and his intercourse with French officers (during the occupation of Frankfurt) were circumstances of some importance in his early education. When sixteen years old, he went to study law at Leipzig, but paid more attention to poetry than to law. He had written a poem—"on the Descent of Christ into Hades"—before he went to Leipzig, and during his three years at the university he wrote some lyrical poems, besides two light dramatic sketches—"A Lover's Humour" and "the Accomplices."—These, it is said, were anonymously published in 1769, but no copies of that date have

been found. In 1768 he returned home, and in 1770 went to Strassburg to complete his law-studies. Again, however, these held but a subordinate place in his estimation. His attention was partly occupied with chemistry and anatomy, and he was led by Herder to study the poetry found in the Old Testament, in Homer and Shakespeare, and in "the people's songs" of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Such studies served in later years to educate the poet and to place him far above the young men of his time, who were loudly hailing a coming revolution in literature. These were "the original geniuses," and to their class he for some time after 1770 belonged. Innovation had attacked morals, manners, and religion, and had invaded the realm of imaginative literature. It was decreed, that the poetry of the past age must be cast aside as a worn-out sort of manufacture. "It was made, not inspired," said the critics of the time, and their judgment was confirmed by Goethe. All the young men of genius were agreed, that what was now wanted was something new, wonderful, never dreamed of before in the world! They next undertook to supply the poetry wanted for the future—and wrote quite enough of it. One wrote a wild play called "*Sturm und Drang*," and these two words—meaning Storm and Pressure—were accepted as the name of the period—also known as "the time of the original geniuses." When they said that the poetry of the old times was made, and not inspired, they seemed to forget that their own was for the most part neither inspired nor made. In several instances their lives were as wild as their notions of genius and poetry.

These young enthusiasts were delighted in 1773, when Goethe published his drama, "*Götz von Berlichingen*." It realized the ideal desiderated by the originals. It was a national drama, and the character of its hero was not too remote from popular sympathies. The play was written in defiance of the rules of the French drama, and therefore was hailed by lovers of innovation. On the other hand, *Götz* gave offence to all admirers of the French theatre,

including the King, who spoke of the new drama as "Une imitation détestable de ces abominables pièces de Shakespeare." A still greater success followed the publication of the sentimental romance, "The Sorrows of Werther," in 1774. Some parts of the work were founded on the writer's experience, but were given in connection with several fictitious circumstances. The public accepted the story as a faithful biography, and, for a time, the incidents were talked of as facts that had taken place at Wetzlar. Travelers came there to find some relics of the melancholy man who died for love, and the landlord of an inn there raised a small mound of earth in his garden, and, for a trifling gratuity, exhibited it as "the grave of the unfortunate Werther." All the blame of this extravagance must not be cast on Goethe. His sentimental romance was the effect of a literary epidemic, which he afterwards treated with ridicule in his "Triumph of Sensibility." In the years 1774-76, he wrote, besides some parts of "Faust" and "Egmont," several satirical pieces, the plays "Clavigo," "Stella" and "Claudine von Villa Bella," and the operetta "Erwin and Elmire." Meanwhile he found time to help his friend Lavater in collecting portraits for his costly and once famous book on physiognomy, and made a tour on the Rhine. His associates on this journey were Lavater, the mystic pietist, and Basedow, the rationalist! Hamann and Nicolai should have been with them; then the party would have been complete, as representative of a time when all sorts of contradictions were thrown together. At an inn at Coblenz—so Goethe tells us—Lavater was busy in explaining the Apocalypse to a rural pastor, and Basedow was attacking the orthodoxy of a dancing-master, while the author of Götz was quietly eating a slice of salmon and a pullet.

In 1775—as some authors have said—the youthful period in Goethe's career was closed. This precise statement seems due to a love of systematic writing; for it makes the poet's youth close with his removal to Weimar. It is true,

he was twenty-seven years old when he received from the young prince Karl August of Saxe-Weimar an invitation to his Court, and, soon afterwards, the poet was made a member of the privy council; but at Weimar, in its genial time, the cares of state were supposed to be reconcilable with the playfulness of youth. For the amateur theatre at Weimar, he wrote several slight dramatic pieces, and "Iphigenia" in its first form. This drama was afterwards greatly improved and written completely in verse in 1786, when the poet was travelling in Italy. Apart from considerations of popularity or fitness for theatrical representation, "Iphigenia" may be described as the author's most artistic drama. All its parts are closely united, its motives are clearly developed, and one consistent tone of dignity and repose prevails from the beginning to the end. But readers who wish to find here the stirring incidents and loud passion of a modern play may find in this modern-antique drama the coldness of Greek sculpture, as well as its repose.

"Iphigenia" was followed by another drama, "Tasso," at first written in prose (1780-81), and completed in iambic verse in 1789. In its general purport it represents the truth, that the highest genius wants a moral as well as an intellectual education. "A hundred times," says Goethe, "I have heard artists boast, that they owed everything to themselves, and I have often been provoked to reply, 'Yes, and the result is just what might have been expected.'" The central character of the drama represents enthusiasm and genius, wanting education in the highest sense of the word. The thoughts and feelings of the poet take the place of external incidents; in other words, the action is intellectual and emotional. The three dramas—"Egmont," "Iphigenia," and "Tasso"—were followed by some inferior productions. In accordance with his habit of putting into some form more or less poetical all events that were parts of his own experience, Goethe wrote several dramatic works having reference to the political movements of the age. Here, in several passages, he exposed the

corruption of the upper classes in France, and expressed his belief that such an outburst of the lowest passions as had occurred in Paris could never have been made possible save by an extremely bad government. The drama "*Eugenie*," or "*The Natural Daughter*" (1801), was intended to form the first part of a trilogy—a circumstance that explains its slow progression and want of dramatic effect. The whole design of which only a part was completed—was intended to include an exposition of the writer's views respecting the Revolution. To divert his attention from the miserable events of the time he translated the old epic of "*Reynard the Fox*."

A work far greater in design and in power of execution than any yet named appeared in 1790, when "*Faust*" was published as "a fragment." There are some poems that are as remarkable for the attractive power of their subjects as for their literary merits. The master-thought of "*Prometheus Bound*" might have given success to a play written by a poet inferior to *Æschylus*. Without a word to detract from the poetic merits of Cervantes, it may be said that the world-wide fame of his great romance is partly owing to his happy choice of a subject. But a theme of far wider and deeper interest—the myth of *Faust*—haunted the mind of Goethe from youth to old age. Had he treated the story with less power, it might still have been successful; for, while its form and many of its details are intensely German, its interest is universal. It is founded on a melancholy truth—a truth of which the poet was profoundly conscious, even in the time of his old age—there is a feeling of duality in human nature. "Two souls," says *Faust*, "are striving in my breast; each from the other longing to be free." In fact, the two souls represented in the play as *Faust* and his evil "companion"—*Mephistopheles*—are one; but for poetic purposes the light and the darkness are separated. The mind that would liberate, refine, and even consecrate nature is put apart from the brutal and fiendish mind that would degrade and destroy nature, and so we have on one

side the man—on the other, the fiend. In the exposition of the drama, Faust binds himself to his own lower nature; in the development, he strives more and more to liberate himself; and he at last succeeds, in his way. As he rises towards freedom, the distance between his own character and that of his companion increases, until death makes the separation perfect. On the other hand, the character of the enemy, as it is made more and more distinct from that of Faust, becomes also more and more darkly shaded. The fiend appears, at first, as a cynical satirist, not without humour; but as the story proceeds, he is described as a sorcerer and a murderer. He is Satan, without any disguise, in the midst of infernal revels on the Blocksberg, and at the close of the drama—in the second part—his character appears still worse, though this might seem impossible. Faust is made—for a short time—to act as the slave of the tempter, and it is contrived that, while in this mood, he shall meet the heroine, Margaret, a poetical representative of nature herself in her primeval innocence. Her presence makes the contrast between Faust and his bad attendant more apparent. The latter becomes more and more cynical. He has assumed the disguise of a modern gentleman; but is detected at once by his victim's intuition. A slight halt in the left foot might be concealed, but his sneer betrays him to the girl's clear insight. She tells his character in a few simple words:—

“ You see that he with no soul sympathizes :
 ’Tis written on his face—he never loved. . .
 Whenever he comes near, I cannot pray.”

Faust, under the influence of these suggestions, learns to abhor his evil genius, and, in a soliloquy, expresses a longing to be freed from contact with him:—

“ With this new joy that brings
 Me near and nearer Heaven, was given to me
 This man for my companion!—He degrades
 My nature, and with cold and insolent breath
 Turns Heaven's best gifts to mockeries!”

Meanwhile, with a foreboding of coming sorrow, Margaret, sitting alone at her spinning-wheel, is singing—

“ My heart is heavy,
My peace is o'er;
I shall find it never;
Oh never more ! ”

Subsequent scenes in the drama blend together the most discordant elements. The highest passion and the lowest cynicism, ideal aspiration and the coarsest materialism, mysticism and prosaic commonplace, ethereal, religious poetry, and profane caricature :—all are strangely mingled. Margaret—by the machinations of the demon—is surrounded with a cloud of guilt and disgrace. Her mother, her brother, and lastly her own child, are destroyed ; and of two of these crimes she has been made an unconscious agent. Tormented by the terrors of the guilt that belongs to others, she seeks refuge in the cathedral, where she used to pray when a child. There an evil spirit haunts her while the tones of the organ and the choir—singing the “ *Dies iræ* ”—threaten condemnation :—

Evil Spirit. “ Ah, happier in her childhood's day,
Margaret in innocence would come to pray,
And, kneeling here, beside the altar-stairs,
With tiny book in hand, lisped out her prayers,
While thinking half of Heaven and half of play !
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Would'st thou pray now for thine own mother's soul
Sent by thyself into her long, last sleep ? ”

Margaret. “ Woe ! Woe ! Were I but free
From these bad thoughts that follow me
And threaten me, where'er I go ! ”

She is condemned to die. The sentence of death has been passed upon her, when Faust comes, before daybreak, intending to snatch her away from the sword of the executioner.

Faust. " 'Tis dawning, love! no tarrying; haste away! "

Margaret. " Yes, it grows light; it brings to me the day
That is to be my last!—and 'twas to be
The morning for my wedding! "

Ah! see the crowd is gathering; but how still
The streets! the square!
It cannot hold the thousands that are there;
The bell is tolling; now they bind me fast,
They hurry me along; there shines the sword
To fall upon no neck but mine!—How dumb
All the world lies around me, like the grave! "

Faust. " Oh, that I never had been born! "

Mephistopheles. " Away!
You perish if you loiter now. See there!
My horses are shuddering in the chilly air;
The day is dawning—Come! "

Marg. " What rises from the earth?—'Tis he! 'Tis he!
How dares he to come hither? Drive him forth!
This is a sacred place; dares he to come
Hither for me? "—

Faust. " No; thou shalt live! "

Marg. " Thou Judge of all! to Thee myself I give! "

Meph. " Come: or I leave you—Both to perish! "

But this is a vain threat. The spirit who denies and destroys has lost, for ever, his power over the soul of Margaret.—" She is judged! " he exclaims, in his fierce anger; but a voice from above replies, " she is saved. "

Our limits will not allow us to give more of " Faust " than the central subject which gives meaning and interest to all the wild diablerie found in other scenes of this unique drama. Some passages were written in 1774; others were added in 1777-80. The first part was completed in 1806. The second part, begun in 1780, was completed in 1831, a few months before the close of the poet's life.

During the years 1775-93, of which the literary work has been briefly noticed, Goethe had for some time a con-

siderable share in the cares of government, and, in recognition of his services, he was raised to the rank of nobility in 1782. After his return from Italy (1788) his duties were made light, and he undertook the superintendence of the theatre at Weimar (1790). He accompanied the duke in the useless campaign in France (1792), and was present at the siege of Mayence in the following year.

In 1794 Goethe and Schiller were united by a bond of friendship which remained unbroken until 1805. The latter came to Weimar in 1787, when Goethe was travelling in Italy. In the following year he gained for Schiller an appointment—at first, without a salary—as professor of history at Jena; but the two poets, though meeting now and then, remained almost strangers to each other until 1794, when Schiller started his literary journal, “die Horen,” to which Goethe was a contributor. In 1796-97 they were more closely allied as writers of several series of epigrams, of which the fourth—the “Xenien”—was satirical; and some of the best of Goethe’s ballads appeared about the same time. Meanwhile, the didactic romance, “Wilhelm Meister’s Lehrjahre,” was completed (1796). Its sequel, the “Wanderjahre,” was one of his latest works. In 1798, the epic-idyll “Hermann and Dorothea” appeared. In this well-known poem a story of domestic interest is united with events of national importance. The characters are few and clearly drawn, and the ruling thought is well developed.

After Schiller’s death (1805) and in the time of national gloom that followed 1806, Goethe, to beguile care, wrote his autobiography, and the “Wahlverwandtschaften,” a romance censured for its want of reserve in describing the results of unhappy matrimony. His own marriage (1806) afforded him no intellectual companionship in his home. Some extreme representations have been made of the contrast there existing; but they are not founded on any confessions made by himself. After 1807 his connection with the theatre was made a source of frequent annoyances. In

1816 he was left in domestic loneliness by the death of his wife. His connection with the theatre came to an end in the following year, when it was proposed to introduce on the stage, at Weimar, a melodrama—"the Dog of Aubry"—in which a well-trained poodle had the chief part. Goethe, as superintendent of the theatre, would not give his consent to the proposed innovation, and he was therefore compelled to resign his office. During the years 1808-16, he published several contributions to science, art and archæology, and some stories—afterwards inserted in the "Wanderjahre." The results of his studies in osteology and the morphology of plants have been accepted as valuable; but his "Doctrine of Colours," has been generally rejected by mathematical writers on optics. The "West-East Divan," a series of poems introducing Oriental forms of expression, was suggested by studies of Persian poetry.

The second part of "Faust" and the "Wanderjahre"—as reconstructed in 1829—supplied literary occupation for advanced age. Of the former, several parts must still be described as riddles that wait for a solution; but one part is clear. Faust devotes himself to work inspired by benevolence, and thus finally escapes from his evil genius. A king whom Faust has served gives him for his reward a wide waste of land on the sea-shore, which he resolves to save from devastation and to enrich with cultivation. It is not for the sake of ambition or luxury, but for the victory of industry that he labours on. In extreme old age, he battles with the rude elements of nature to the last, and then enjoys, in dying, a vision of future results. In the more remarkable parts of the "Wanderjahre" ("Years of Travel") we find anticipated some of the social questions of the present times; and their solution is described as taking place in a kind of Utopia planned by the author. Here labour is educated and organized, and old guild-laws for apprentices, journeymen, and masters, are revived, with some modifications. Education is made physical and industrial, as well as mental and religious, and is founded on "the three reverences."

The first has for its object the supernatural world ; the second—we are told—finds expression in social relationships ; and the last is shown in the presence of humiliation and divine suffering as revealed in the Christian Religion, which—it is said—can never cease to exist. These words, and others more remarkable on the same subject, are ascribed to one of the three presidents of an educational institution.

The lyrical poetry written in the time of his old age has for the most part a didactic tendency, and sometimes reminds us that “the night cometh when no man can work.” But the poet still recommends the culture of art, and his motto is “remember to live,” even when his topics are mutability and death. His old age was, on the whole, genial and cheerful ; but a shade was cast over his thoughts in 1828, when his friend Karl August died, and again in 1830, when his only son August—born in 1789—died in Italy. Not long before his own death, Goethe paid a visit to Jena and its neighbourhood, and so recalled to memory some of the most pleasing associations of his life. He ascended the heights, and thence looked forth into the free expanse of heaven ; then down on the well-loved landscape. Of all the friends whom in his youth he had known in those valleys, how few were still living—of friends older than himself only one ! “I feel well here,” said he, while resting on the height, and he added—forgetting he was nearly eighty years old—“we will often come up here again !” That promise was not fulfilled. He died, at noon, 22nd March, 1832.

No attempt can be made within our limits to estimate all the literary work of the life thus briefly described. Goethe wrote, in verse, lyric, epic and dramatic poetry ; in prose, novels and romances, biography, criticism and contributions to science. His extensive correspondence supplies abundant materials for a biography that some day may be made so complete as to be almost unique. Among the poet’s German biographers may be named : Schäfer, Viehoff and Gödeke. The “Life of Goethe” by G. H. Lewes is as popular in Germany as in England.

The times in which the poet lived must be studied, if we would fairly estimate the character of his writings. He lived long ; but he never forgot the tendencies of the period when he was young. He did not, even in his youthful days, like any notions of violent political revolution ; yet he retained long some of the ideas then spread abroad by the "Illuminati," and by other secret unions or societies. In 1780 he made himself a member of a Freemasons' Lodge—the Amalia Lodge, at Weimar—and he always retained an idea of spreading culture by means of "unions" or "brotherhoods." His taste for "diablerie," and for "mysteries," may be partly ascribed to the influence of some of his early studies. A want of due reserve—in writing of human passions and their results—was lamentably prevalent in his youthful time ; and it may still be noticed in some of his later writings. One of his leading traits is a love of writing so as to conceal partly his meaning, or to cast over it some veil of mystery. This is especially observed in the productions of his old age ; but it is found also in some of his earlier poems—for example, in "the Mysteries," written in the year 1785.

Can Goethe's religious belief be defined by the use of any concise terms ?—The reply, in substance, has often been this—"It was a poetical form of pantheism." The vague word "pantheism" is here quoted—not without reluctance—to designate one side of the belief more or less clearly expressed in his poetry. But there remains something more to be said, if we would give fairly the whole truth. More and more, in his later years, he became conscious of that innate tendency to evil of which his "Faust" is an energetic expression ; and in his old age he entertained a sentiment that may perhaps be fairly described as a profound veneration for certain ideas that are especially Christian. It is true that his poems may often suggest a "worship of nature ;" but what did he understand when he spoke of nature as our sure guide and teacher ?—The terrors, and the darkness, and the mystery of the world surrounding us—

these were but seldom in his thoughts. He loved rather to contemplate all that is quiet and regular, or beautiful and beneficent in that world; and it must not be forgotten, that "nature"—as understood by Goethe—includes human life and experience. It has often been said, "he was a heathen;" and there are not wanting passages of his writings that might confirm such a judgment. On the other side, it has been observed, that the indirect influence of his highest poetry is not adverse to religion. These commonplace sayings—like many of their class—have their use, when one serves to correct the other. Such antitheses cannot, however, afford much aid, when our aim is to say something fair and truthful of Goethe, and of the educational character of his chief writings.

Earth and heaven—the real and the ideal—the natural and the supernatural—the antithesis denoted by these several forms is one belonging to antiquity and to modern times, to heathenism and to Christianity. But in ancient classic art and poetry that which is earthly, real, and natural is predominant; in Christian art and poetry aspiration toward the Divine is predominant—just as the pointed arch and the spire are normal in Christian architecture.

A similar antithesis—yet not exactly the same—may be observed in Goethe's poetry. There are passages that may be called earthly or naturalistic, and others that cannot be called irreligious. The tendencies prevalent in his poems are not well described by means of such terms as "heathen" and "Christian"—nor indeed by any other words denoting extreme opposition. Where a naturalistic tendency prevails, its form of expression is mostly direct; where a higher and purer tendency prevails, the expression is often indirect. It does not follow that it is ineffective. In our best English poetry, some of the finest passages are indirectly religious; they lead toward reverence, though the object of the reverence is not defined. They assume as existing some relation of things seen to a world unseen; some union of

the real and the ideal, the permanent and the transitory. True and earnest poetry is something more than fiction ; its abiding interest depends on something more than a liking for amusement. In popular forms of poetry—narrative and dramatic—when virtue at last prevails over vice, is there not thus assumed, or anticipated, an idea like that which religion declares to be true ? And even in tragedy,—when good is apparently overcome by evil—is the conclusion nothing better than despair ? Does not the close of the tragedy—if true and sublime—serve rather to suggest, that the victory not won apparently *here*—in this life—must be won *there*—in another ? And is not this a truth revealed in Christianity ? The Book of Job is poetical ; it affirms no conclusive doctrine respecting the mysterious ways of Providence. Yet it contains truth as well as poetry. The drama—even in its darkest passages—indicates faith in the truth : that a substance exists behind the shadows ; that the whole may be clear, though some parts belonging to it are dark.

It is enough, if these remarks serve to suggest our belief, that religion and poetry are closely connected—not always by their common theme, nor always by a frequent use of such words as should be held sacred—but by their suggestion or assertion of one common predominant idea—the idea of a union ever existing between the transitory and the permanent. This union is assumed to be true, when eternal wisdom is conveyed to us by means of familiar parables.

The notion that art should be cultivated “for the sake of art alone,” is one that finds some apparent support in certain parts of Goethe’s writings. On this account it has been noticed in a cursory way, and so that it may be placed in contrast with a fact almost too often asserted by the poet—that his writings, are, in their own indirect way, “educational.” He regards life—with all its errors, and failures and mysteries—as a process of education, and believes that it is controlled by an unknown Power, whose designs are mostly revealed in nature and in human expe-

rience. Of this one predominant idea his chief works—beginning with “Faust” and ending with the “Years of Travel”—are special expositions.

Accepting then his own account of his general intention—there are two errors to be avoided. The moral or religious value of his teaching—whatever this may be—should not be underrated because the style is indirect : on the other hand, his doctrine should not be accepted as true, simply on account of its accordance with his own pantheistic idea of religion, or with his own realistic limitations of inquiry—the latter not always strictly regarded by himself. He was, first of all, a true poet ; and moreover was a man endowed with an intellect so expansive, so sagacious—in certain respects only so refined—that he would have been a great genius, even if he had not been a poet. It is no light work to estimate, in a fair and genial way, the ethic and religious influence of such a man. To make the task light—as far as is possible—personal observations will here be made subordinate, or will be noticed only as relating to certain passages in his writings. The outcries of his enemies, and the laudations of his worshippers will be left unnoticed. Among his commentators—rather numerous—there are men to whose writings one may with much profit refer, when the aim is an analysis of his genius, or where an attempt is made to find in his writings that comprehensive teaching which—as accepted by some of his disciples—has been called “philosophy.” But no attempt will here be made to analyse that philosophy. For the most part, there will be noticed only facts about which hardly any dispute exists.

Whether for good or for evil, the influence of Goethe's genius has spread itself widely. This influence is at once æsthetic and moral—to say nothing just now of its indirect religious tendency. It is especially the character of the poet's teaching that should be noticed—the influence, indirect and therefore powerful, spreading itself by means of sympathy from soul to soul. To those who find a paradox in the words “indirect and therefore powerful” a question

may be suggested:—Suppose for a moment, that the general tendency of Sir Walter Scott's writings—his poems in verse and prose, but chiefly those in prose—had been really, though indirectly, adverse to religion—would the result have no importance? Or let a like supposition be allowed respecting such authors as Goldsmith, Thomson, Gray, Crabbe, Coleridge, and Wordsworth. In that case would their influence tell for nothing, if weighed against that of the religious poets, Watts, Cowper, James Montgomery, and Keble? The questions answer themselves; but still deserve notice. They suggest the thought, that a concordance—indirect yet true—may exist between literary culture and religious sentiment.

There are errors that have made more difficult than it should be a fair estimate of the moral and religious tendencies ascribed to Goethe's writings. In some cases, his own words have been confused with those of his critics and commentators. In other cases his own words are truly quoted, but without due regard to the time when they were written. His religious views should be noticed as belonging respectively to one of the three distinct periods in his long life—youth, middle life, and old age. Unfortunately, in some cases, a polemical tone has been employed in criticism where calmness is especially required. Goethe was not a polemical writer; nor was he extremely anxious to make each word he uttered consistent with every other word. Accordingly his forms of expression must be carefully, yet not too strictly interpreted. These observations relate especially to the words he employed for the expression of his more serious opinions respecting the claims of Christianity. These may now be more distinctly noticed.

His belief, as held in the years of his early manhood—say in the time 1776-81—may be called "pantheistic;" or may as fairly be called "rationalistic." One term—though vague—may indicate the sentiments suggested by his early study of Spinoza's philosophy; the other may denote his

early rejection of historical Christianity. In both his early and his middle life this rejection was, in its extent, not unlike the unbelief of the rationalists who were so numerous in his time ; yet he was not altogether a man of their school. They did not like his poetry ; and he did not like their cold, prosaic teaching. There are three facts that may be easily established on evidences supplied by his own writings :— He rejected the central tenet of Christianity ; he found for himself and others like himself, but “not for all men”—this he expressly tells us—that moral and æsthetic culture might serve partly as a substitute for religion ; lastly, in the time of his old age, he entertained feelings of veneration for the leading ideas—even for the mysteries—of the Christian faith. The evidences on which these assertions rest may here be briefly noticed.

There is found in Goethe's correspondence one letter especially remarkable as containing a distinct and emphatic declaration that he rejects the truth—the central tenet—of the Christian religion. He gives not a syllable of reasoning to justify his unbelief, but asserts it as an axiom. Thus he gives, in few words, the main result of all the rationalism so popular in his time. He was a great man ; but when writing this declaration he was in fact making himself an echo of the vulgar rationalism he had learned from Basedow (pp. 59, 115) and his disciples. The tone of the letter—addressed, by-the-by, to a faithful old friend—is altogether wrong, and would be so, even were the subject one not demanding any especial reverence. A man's faith—whatever it be, if but earnest—ought never to be thus rudely contradicted. The letter referred to was addressed to Lavater as a reply to an assertion of his own faith. Many a time had his advice been serviceable and welcome to the young poet, as was confessed in this same year (1781) when Goethe thus wrote to his friend :—“I am conscious of the fact you so well describe ; that God and Satan—Hell and Heaven—are [striving for the mastery] within me. Pray, breathe forth a benediction upon my bust ; and, perhaps, your good influ-

ence may travel on and reach myself. You will do good to many, if you do good to me."

There exist—among thoughtful readers—some differences of estimate respecting the importance sometimes ascribed to the opinions of great men, when they speak of religion. The question suggested is too large to be discussed here; yet it may be submitted that, however great a man may be, his judgment can have little weight when he fails to speak with calm deliberation. Now the decennium 1776-86—as seen from an ethical point of view—was not the most correct period in Goethe's life. There is implied no bigotry, when we describe as frivolous such observations as those following. Two or three of the sentences most objectionable are omitted.

"Your Christ [*i.e.* your ideal portraiture of Christ] has awakened my wonder and admiration. It is glorious to see how ancient records have supplied for you an outline of a person and character in which you find all that your soul requires—an outline, I say, of which your own faith has made a complete portraiture; so that in him you can now see yourself, as in a mirror, and in fact can thus worship yourself. . . . On the contrary we [*i.e.* we rationalists] are not the disciples of any one master; we have many teachers. We regard ourselves as all sons of God, and worship him as existing in ourselves and in all his children. You cannot change your creed; but since you assert it again and again, with so much pertinacity, pray allow me to remind you, that we also have a faith—the faith of humanity—founded firmly as on a rock of brass. You and all Christendom [as a sea raging around that rock] may cast over it the spray of your billows; but you will never overwhelm it, and never shake it." . . . [The sentences following are taken from a letter written in 1782.] "I would not have my views defined as antichristian; nor would I represent them as altogether unchristian [in a moral sense] but I would describe both myself and my views as simply non-christian. Hence you must conclude, how unwelcome to me are all such books as your 'Pontius Pilate'" [published in 1782]. . . . "You think there is nothing so beautiful as the Gospel. Now among all the books ancient and modern—written by men to whom God has given wisdom—I find thousands of pages as beautiful, as useful, and as indispensable for the instruction of mankind. Remember, dear brother, that my faith—for myself—is a matter as earnest as yours can be—for yourself. Were I a preacher, you would find me as

zealous in defending my notion of an [intellectual] aristocracy as you are now in asserting your idea of Christ's monarchy. Nay; if I had to preach in defence of my own religion, you might find me even less tolerant than now I find you."

The passages quoted, though they were rather hastily written, give a fair account of Goethe's early unbelief. These confessions, made in 1781-2, were not directly contradicted in the writings of his later years. Christianity was thus easily dismissed by means of a few words—satirical and contemptuous, as the context, if given in full, might show. It remains true, however, that an idea so unfairly treated will haunt the memory from which it has been intentionally expelled. There was something better than this to be said of Christianity; and Goethe, in his later years, was compelled to say it. Then—when his mind and soul were expanded, when the eye, dim for the shows of life, could see more of the future—when care for humanity was more serious—when coming difficulties of society were foreboded; then he remembered and named with reverence the faith too proudly rejected in his earlier years.

It has been intimated, that the poet's first ten years in Weimar (1775-85) belonged especially to a time when freedom—as regards social institutions and manners—was not strictly defined as distinct from license. So much has been said—unfortunately printed and published also—respecting those years, that it seems a relief to forget them, or to refer to them briefly. In 1786-7 the poet visited Italy; his love of artistic studies was greatly increased; his style—naturally good—was refined and made more attractive than ever, and about the same time his relations toward some of his earlier friends—especially Lavater and Jacobi—were altered. Their religious notions were now treated more contemptuously. In his studies of nature and art, and in his indifference toward positive Christianity, the poet assumed a position sometimes called "aristocratic." It might, perhaps, rather more appropriately be called æsthetic, if the term is not accepted in the shallow sense now too popular.

To make almost every other study subservient more or less to his own artistic culture—this was one of the poet's highest aims. He found, for example, a subject for art in the character of a pietistic lady—Fräulein von Klettenberg—and made her portraiture so life-like, that her sentiments have sometimes been quoted as if they were his own. But the poet has corrected the error. "Her sentiments"—he says—"arose from a confusion of the subjective with the objective;" that is to say, they were dreams in the day-time. This fragment of so-called "religious philosophy" would not be worth notice, did it not serve to point to careless quotation, as a cause of numerous errors. We advert chiefly to errors respecting some of Goethe's sayings, as published by himself, or reported by others. Where did he say it?—When?—To whom?—Speaking for himself?—Or in some dramatic way?—These are the questions by which so-called quotations should be tested.

By means of careless quotation, it is easy to ascribe to Goethe opinions and even articles of faith that he never accepted. One example—not imaginary—may be given. A genial critic,—Gelzer—when ascribing to Goethe the following words, observes truly that, "as coming from him, they must excite surprise":—

"The Christian Religion—often enough dismembered and scattered here and there—must at last be found collected and restored to union by the Cross."

It is true, these words are found in the "Years of Travel"—near the end of the first book—but are they the words of Goethe, speaking in his own person?—A reference to the passage will give a clear answer. Examples of this kind might be multiplied; but enough has been said to suggest caution in accepting quotations—especially when their words belong to passages more or less dramatic and imaginative. A poet's teaching must always be more or less indirect. How far may he deviate from the way of direct moral teaching?—This difficult question meets us when Goethe's chief works in prose-fiction are noticed.

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The time 1787-1809 may be described as the middle period of the poet's life; it was the time in which his best literary works were produced:—"Iphigenia" (1787), "Pygmont" (1788), "Torquata Tasso" (1790), "Faust," Part I ("a fragment," 1790), the same (complete, 1818), "Wilhelm Meister's Lehrjahre" (1795-6), "Hermann und Dorothea" (1798), "die Wahlverwandtschaften" (1809), and several fine lyrical poems. The two works of prose-fiction here named might suggest a vexed question, often yet vainly discussed, respecting the moral tendencies of novels and romances. Their teaching must—in accordance with the rules of art—be indirect, dramatic, or at any rate imaginative; not directly didactic. The lights and the shadows of real life are in fiction displayed, sometimes in bold contrast; sometimes in a blending of hues that seem mutually complementary and harmonious. That which in wholesome didactic prose is simply "wrong," is in fiction made—too often—wickedly attractive; and the punishment due for transgression is so inflicted that sympathy with the sufferer makes holiness itself seem harsh and unattractive. These remarks apply especially to the novel already named as the last of Goethe's prose-writings belonging to the time 1787-1809. It gives, with minute and painful description, the details of an unhappy marriage; and the writer's want of reserve has been justly condemned. It is granted, however, that the construction of the story is artistic, and that its melancholy conclusion indirectly asserts the authority of law over passion. The question remains, can the end in this case sanctify the means?

"Wilhelm Meister's Lehrjahre" is a romance with an educational tendency. The title-word "Lehrjahre" (apprenticeship) relates to certain laws for apprentices in the trade companies of old times. The "Wanderjahre" (years of travel) remind us of the old trade-rule, that journeymen must spend some years in travelling from place to place—working here and there, so as to gain experience—before they could be admitted as masters in a trade guild. This



sequel is chiefly remarkable on account of the utilitarian character of many passages. It has been said that Goethe in his old age seemed to have a prevision of coming times and their social problems. When contrasted with the opening scenes in "*Faust*" (part I), the close of Wilhelm Meister's educational course is remarkable.

The training he receives during his apprenticeship is placed under the superintendence of a mysterious brotherhood, whose members meet him from time to time, and afford some guidance to his career. Their teaching indicates the doctrine that a true education should embrace the whole character of a man, and not only one or two of his talents. The hero is found, however, after all the training he has received, still weak and vacillating. His further education is described in the "*Years of Travel*." Here he is taught that he must not avoid the lowlier duties of life and soar away to enjoy high art. He is next introduced to an educational and industrial Utopia where a solution is found of problems still connected with property and labour, co-operation, the results of machinery, and plans of emigration. Labour is educated and organized, while old guild laws for apprentices, journeymen, and masters are revived with some modifications of their details. Education is made physical as well as mental and religious, and is founded on "*reverence*." The future dignity of educated and co-operative labour is predicted; and a co-operative society of weavers is described at great length and with many minute details. It seems strange to find the author of "*Faust*" writing of the culture of potatoes. He gives a warning against dependence for food on these uncertain tubers; and it is noticeable that this warning was written eighteen years before the potato famine of 1847. Some of the views on art expressed in this work may excite surprise. Goethe will have no theatres and no players tolerated; but vocal music is to be generally cultivated, and to be used as a means of stimulating a cheerful industry. The religion of this Utopia is mysteriously indicated. The Commonwealth has a strict system of police.

Taverns, like theatres, are abolished. The land is not demoralized by a standing army; but drill is an important part of education, and every man is trained to fight in his own defence. Neither bells nor drums are tolerated, but companies of working-men are summoned to their labour by the harmonious sounds of wind instruments. Lastly, a union is formed for the promotion and regulation of free and extensive emigration, well supported by capital, labour, and good organization.

For many of Goethe's readers, the conclusion of "the Wanderjahre"—like that of "Faust" (part II)—is a disappointment. It looks like an industrial solution of the problem suggested in the first part, the problem of man's destiny; and we are once more reminded of the sole gospel preached by Carlyle—"work." In order that the poet's earlier thoughts of man's destiny may be compared with his latest teaching, two or three quotations from "Faust" (part I), may here serve to introduce some remarkable passages in the "Years of Travel."

As we have seen, the poet, in the first part of "Faust," has represented the duality and the consequent discontent of man's nature. In the opening scene of the drama, Faust, a gray professor, is seated at his desk in a gothic chamber. The moon pours her light through the window. He is surrounded by books, dusty parchments, and instruments of science, on which he looks with weariness. He has arrived at the stage of thought when he despairs of the power of study. It is from powers of which man is unconscious that all the wonders of creation proceed. When contrasted with those powers, all our studies are but a "vanity of vanities." Law, medicine, theology—all are dry abstractions, having no union with life—conferring on the student no power to enjoy the resources of nature. His ambition is partly sensuous and egotistic. It is nothing less than theurgic power, or "dæmonic energy," for which he is craving. That religious thought should make this finite world appear as it is—untrue; that the aim of study should

be to obtain rest, not excitement; that man should rise above his own nature, and subdue its passions—this is not Faust's belief. Such philosophy is for him a realm of shadows. He would explore, he says, "the fountains whence flows life throughout creation," and would refresh himself in their streams. But this, he knows, is impossible. He has no faith in any revelation; and he has lost faith in science. It is but "a thing of shreds and patches." Despairing of ever knowing more than mere words and forms, he resolves to die, rather than to live on as a useless pedant. There stands near him, on one of the shelves of his library, an old brown goblet—an heir-loom of his family—in days of yore often crowned at domestic festivals. He fills it with poison, and lifts it to his lips, when suddenly the current of his thoughts is changed. Melodious bells are pealing; and from a neighbouring church come floating through the air the sounds of a choral hymn. It is Easter morning, and they are singing:—

"Christ has arisen
Out of death's prison.
Listen, all men to the call,
Share the joy, disciples all;
Make his triumph all your own,
In your lives his love be shown;
By your deeds his praises speak,
Feed the hungry, aid the weak.
Ever living, He is near;
Ever loving, He is here."

The old associations of the time are recalled. "O heavenly tones"—Faust now exclaims—

"Ye call me back to life again, sweet bells,
Ye call to mind the time when Sabbath peace
Fell on my spirit, like a kiss from heaven."

But the music of the peal and the hymn does not restore to him the cheerful faith of his childhood. "I hear the tidings," he says, "but no longer with the ear of faith." Still a mere recollection of his early belief affords a passing

consolation. The old brown goblet is set aside; and soon afterwards he wanders forth into the fields, where are assembled in many little parties the townspeople—all come out in their best array to enjoy their holiday. Faust feels some little superficial pleasure while he looks upon them; but there is more of scepticism than of faith in his next soliloquy:—

“With joy they celebrate the day,
For they themselves have burst away
As out of prison, or from the tomb;
From many a workshop’s dusty gloom,
From many a narrow, crowded street
They come, each other here to greet;
Or from the minster’s solemn night
They wander forth into the light.”

When evening comes on, he retires into the solitude of the old gothic chamber; and again his thoughts of despair return, and take possession of his mind. As the fable tells us, he is now visited by his evil genius—“the spirit who always denies.” In truth, however, that evil genius is but a symbolical expression of Faust’s own discontent and egotism. “Every man is tempted by himself.” The evil that seems to come from without comes from within. Instead of the spirit who can reveal to the aspirant the mysteries of life and creation, it is the demon who would deny and destroy that now appears in a human form. It is, indeed, the man’s own worse self that arises and stands before him. With a bitter sense of the duality of his own existence—of the contrast between his ambition and its results—Faust describes his whole life as a failure and disappointment. He denounces all attractions that bind him to life; and utters a dreadful formula of imprecation. When it is concluded, a chorus of invisible spirits utter a lamentation:—

“Woe, woe for thee!—a world how fair
Hast thou destroyed in thy despair!
To the dark void the wreck we bear.

O mighty one, thou earth-born son !
In thine own soul build up, once more,
The world, so fair, that we deplore ! ”

The reply that his evil genius gives to the lamentation is very subtle. He suggests that the best way to build up a new life is to renounce all philosophy and to seize such sensual pleasures as the world affords. In the conversation that follows, Faust more deliberately renounces all the hopes of his moral and intellectual nature. The demon undertakes to supply the want of them by such excitements as sensual life affords. Faust denies that the fiend, by means of “all the pomps and vanity of this world,” can ever give satisfaction to the soul of man. “If ever,” says he, “I am so charmed with any earthly pleasure that I say to any present moment, ‘Stay ; thou art so fair !’ then I yield myself to suffer the doom that may be inflicted upon me.” This is the substance of the bond between Faust and his evil genius.

And how does Faust ultimately liberate himself?—This question is answered in the second part of the drama. The despair to which vain and ambitious philosophy had led him is not relieved by all the sensual attractions to which for a time he surrenders himself ; nor does he find repose in scientific or in imaginative culture. At last, he devotes himself to the work of social and industrial reformation. He rescues from the ocean a waste stretching far along the sea-shore ; makes it fertile ; and hopes that, in the course of time, it will be crowded with the dwellings of a free and prosperous people. He is now in extreme old age—about a hundred years old—and is stricken with blindness when—dying—he enjoys an anticipation of future results. Thus he speaks of his final work :—

“ Freedom, like life, must be deserved by toil—
Here men shall live, and, on this fertile soil,
Begirt with dangers, shall, from youth to age,
Their constant warfare with the ocean wage.

O could I see my followers !—Might I stand
 Among free people on my own free land !
 To such a moment of intense delight
 I'd, fearless, say—O stay !—thou art so bright !
 Anticipating all that future bliss,
 I have it now.—That moment's here !—"Tis this ! "

So saying, the fighter with the sea reclines upon the soil which he has won from the waves, and in full contentment expires. By his last words, he has—if the letter of the old bond holds good—forfeited his soul to the foe, who is here, ready to show the bond. "Here lies the body," says he, "and now, if the spirit tries to escape, I meet him, at once, with this document."—Angels and demons contend for the possession of the soul ; and Faust is saved—we are told—in consequence of his latest industrial enterprize. Above all it is considered that his motive was purely philanthropic ; and he was persevering in well-doing. Endowed with everlasting youth, he rises to heaven, while the angels who attend him are singing :—

"This member of our heavenly quire
 Is saved from evil powers ;
 Let evermore a soul aspire,
 And we can make him ours."

Can this be the conclusion of "Faust" ?—this the solution of the problem proposed in the first part of the drama ?—As far as is possible, these questions should be answered by some further quotations of the poet's own words. Possibly light may be cast on the conclusion of "Faust," when it is compared with some passages in the "Years of Travel"—those in which the author gives a description of education founded on reverence. They may be found in the first and second chapters of the second book. Here little more than a summary is given.

Wilhelm, in the course of his travels, has surveyed the spacious grounds and buildings belonging to a large educational institution ; and soon afterwards he is introduced to one of its three governors or presidents. Intending to leave his son Felix under their care, the traveller makes

some inquiry respecting their principles and plans of teaching. "You have seen many of our youths"—said the president—"and their bearing might possibly tell you what is our first principle of education." Wilhelm fails, however, to find a ready answer to the implied question. "It is reverence"—said the president—"the first principle of religion."

"Has not religion been founded on fear—or say even on terror?"—the traveller inquired.

"No"—said the president—"fear exists in too many souls; reverence in few. Here no religion is recognized save that which is founded on reverence."

"What then may you call your own religion?"—said Wilhelm.

In reply to this question, the president goes on to speak of "three religions." His remarks might be well understood as definitions of one general sentiment—reverence—passing through three stages of development; but his own forms of expression, though now and then unusual, are retained here, as those most fairly representing Goethe's sentiments. His meaning, in some of the sentences following, may not fully appear; and he may leave still remaining a doubt as regards the extent of his historical belief; but it is clear that he intends to speak in the following passage with profound veneration respecting the mysteries of our Christian Faith:—

"The third religion and the last"—says the president—"is Christianity—the last to which humanity has been found capable of rising; or—might I rather say?—has been compelled to rise."

[Men have been led up by Christ to an ideal that could not have been believed to be possible without his aid.]

"To leave beneath his feet all the shows and honours of this world, and to keep ever in view heaven, his birth-place and home, might seem possible in a wise and good man; but to endure the utmost sorrow—nay, more; to find means of a divine manifestation in his endurance of humiliation,

poverty, contempt, torture, and death—to lift up the vilest out of their sins and miseries ; to make them capable of loving holiness—yea, capable of attaining sanctity—these are facts of which only faint indications had appeared before the time of his coming to dwell with men. And such a coming cannot be temporary, cannot pass away as a fact merely historical. Since human nature has been elevated [in Christ] to a point so high, and has been made capable of rising [by his aid] to such a height, it remains for ever as a point from which humanity cannot recede. The truth that has been made manifest, has been incorporated, [in Christ] can never disappear, and can never cease to exist.”

After further conversation, the visitor is led to view one of the several picture-galleries belonging to the college. First, he notices a series of paintings in which are represented some of the most significant and poetic events in the history of the Jews. The visitor—having noticed the omission of one subject—expresses his surprise, and asks for an explanation. “Here,” says he, “your last picture in the series belongs to a date later than the Crucifixion, and portrays an event that took place when ‘the holy city’ was destroyed—A.D. 70—yet nothing has been seen here reminding me at all of One who, some years before that event, was teaching in the temple. Why this omission of a subject that to me seems one belonging to the national history of Israel ?”

“In one sense of your words”—the president replied—“there does exist the historical connection you have named ; but not in a higher sense. The events of the life to which you refer have an importance infinitely higher than anything belonging to national history ; they introduce us to a new religion, and lead us into a new world.”

While he was speaking, folding-doors were opened, and a way was seen, leading to an interior gallery of paintings. Into this gallery the president now led the visitor, who felt at once that he had passed, as it were, out of one world into another. Nothing was seen here of the strong, energetic

drawing, or of the vivid and striking colours that had been noticed in the paintings of the first series. Here on the contrary, the general tone was softer and more subdued—at once more religious and more poetical—while, for thoughtful and sympathetic minds, the events portrayed were charged with a deeper meaning, and were more attractive. For a time Wilhelm remained silent, while looking upon a picture representing the last supper of Christ with his disciples. Then—on finding that this was the last of the second series—he again expressed his surprise.

“Have you,” said he, “no picture representing the close of that life of which some leading events are here portrayed?”

“Our works of religious art”—the president replied—“are arranged in several series, and are preserved in several galleries, so that those most suitable to awaken thought in students of one grade in culture—especially in the highest culture—may be seen at one time. Those students who may be called beginners are thus led to contemplate first such events as, in their artistic and indirect way, may convey truth applicable to the ordinary events of human experience. The close of that divine life—to which you have referred—should, we think, suggest our deepest thoughts and feelings; and respecting these we maintain some reserve. Only those who are most proficient and thoughtful among our students are led into the sanctuary of divine sorrow. You will visit us again, at the end of a year from the present time; and will then observe how far your son has made progress under our direction. Then more of our paintings will be seen; for that will be the time of our solemn annual festival; and our most advanced students—then about to leave us and go forth into the world—will be led into the sanctuary.”

“You keep then apart from these”—said Wilhelm—“the pictures belonging to your third series?”

“Yes”—said the president—“but already,” he added, “how much have we seen of all that is at once wonderful and familiar! The union of these traits is everywhere seen

in the pictures of this second series. How much may they teach to minds open and childlike—like those of many among our pupils. Here they are taught how He whose name they chiefly reverence, raised fallen men; pardoned sinners; made the ignorant sharers in his wisdom; enriched the poor with more than earthly wealth; cured diseases by means of his touch, and—thus spreading proofs of divine benevolence all around him—lived in the days of his humiliation as a man among men. Yet he did not conceal the truth of his divinity—did not fear to assert his union and equality with his Father—but declared himself to be God. Thus was excited, in the minds of many, wonder without faith; in the hearts of his disciples a deep and true devotion; but at the same time in other men a feeling of enmity, first directed against himself, and then against his followers. These he solemnly warned of the opposition they would have to encounter. They must, he said, endure much persecution. If they would imitate his life, they must share in his sorrow. How truly has the prediction been fulfilled in the experience of those who have endeavoured to follow Him!”

Here suddenly a door was opened. For a moment the visitor entertained the thought that he might be led on to see the pictures belonging to the third series; but the thought was an error; the opened door showed only a corridor, leading back to the entrance-hall of the several galleries. The president—noticing Wilhelm’s look of disappointment—quietly observed, that in obedience to certain rules he could not, on this occasion, show to his visitor the interior gallery.

“You do possess then,” said Wilhelm, “a painting like that which I expected to find in this series?”

“We do”—said the president—“but on all ordinary occasions there remains a veil drawn over that portraiture of divine suffering. We are compelled—by our faith—to condemn as presumptuous the hand that would rashly draw aside the veil; or expose a portraiture of that agony to the

light of the sun—the sun whose face was hidden when a guilty world demanded that sacrifice. Here is the divine depth of sorrow. To notice slightly such a subject; to speak of it rhetorically, or so as in any way to offend feelings of profound reverence—this is a sin to be especially avoided. Of this we will, for the present, say no more. You have, I trust, seen and heard so much of our routine, that when you proceed on your journey you will rest assured of one fact—your son, Felix, is left here under the care of teachers whose plan of education is religious.”

Are these passages to be accepted as representing Goethe's own sentiments in his later years?—For those who have carefully studied his life and character, as portrayed, not in any one book nor in any scanty excerpts, but in the whole range of his various writings, his extensive correspondence, and his later conversations—chiefly those reported by Falk and Eckermann—there can exist no hesitation in giving an affirmative reply. In saying this, we are speaking, not of the poet's formal or precise creed, but of his most religious sentiments. It may seem easy to show that our opinion is erroneous; and it may be as easy to show that the poet was “a rationalist;” or “a pantheist;” or “an Epicurean sceptic.” One proposition may apparently be supported as readily as another. Selected excerpts from the poet's writings may in each case afford evidences such as are required; but in each case the evidence will be partial. Its force will depend at last on a certain supposition—one so commonly accepted that it cannot without hesitation be called a prejudice. It may, however, be regarded as a prejudice, when it is made the basis of an inquiry that, first of all, should be one respecting facts. It is understood as an axiom, that every man—writing or speaking seriously, and on any point relating to his own sentiments—should endeavour to preserve consistency. The rule applies with especial force to every great author—at least to such of his writings as are didactic—it should therefore apply to Goethe. In this conclusion the logic seems good; but it is

logic for which Goethe cared little. This should be remembered by critics. They have first to notice facts; and then should let their own reasonings follow. Hardly any facts can be clearer than these:—that Goethe, in his early manhood, rejected historical Christianity; that, in his middle life, he often wrote of culture—artistic and moral—as if he would make it a substitute for religion; and thirdly that, in his later years, he spoke with reverence of Christian facts and doctrines, including those sometimes called “mysteries.” The evidences relating to the third of these assertions ought to be well-known by everyone who would arrive at a fair conclusion respecting the poet’s religious sentiments. His genius was so far expansive; his sympathies were so far refined, that he could see the beauty, and could feel the force—nay, could know the truth—of a religion which he did not in all respects accept as his own. Religious sentiment is good—the days may come when men will seek for it, as for a lost treasure—yet between sentiment and faith there lies a deep gulf. No assertion is made here respecting the poet’s faith; and on the other hand no assertion is accepted. Our chief aim is to make clear one fact—interesting, if not important—that the faith too lightly dismissed in his youth was not forgotten in his latest days. May it not be suggested that, as the memory of a departed friend is sometimes revived, and becomes so vivid as almost “to haunt the bodily sense”—so religious sentiments, more or less repelled for a time by earthly seductions, may wait for the quiet time of old age, and now reappear, as if newly awakened in the mind?

Goethe, in certain periods of his life, lived and talked as if he would confirm the report, that “he was a heathen poet.” There are facts in his life that might partly serve to justify that summary definition; but there are also facts to be noticed on the other side. It would be a melancholy conclusion if we could be compelled to believe that a mind so sensitive and open to impressions from all things beautiful could utterly reject Christianity. It is one thing to know

that our religion was rejected contemptuously by such men as Friedrich II, Voltaire and La Mettrie; it would be quite another thing if we were assured that—in any similar way, or to any like extent—it was deliberately rejected by Goethe. Those who suppose that this was the case have been naturally led into their error; since they have been guided by a coincidence of evidences coming from two opposite parties—on one side the poet's idolatrous admirers; on the other his bitter opponents. In one respect only the two parties agree; each is narrow and polemical. Their two arguments—ending in a common conclusion, so far as they define his teaching as “non-Christian”—can tell us nothing true respecting a man whose genius was certainly neither narrow nor polemical.

From the whole of the controversy to which these remarks relate we turn away—not without a sense of relief. Lastly there must be given, in the form of a summary, some analytical account of Goethe's genius; and here must be especially noticed the traits that may be called peculiar. Here and there brief quotations from his writings may serve to illustrate our observations. The first general fact to be noticed is the comprehensive character of the poet's mind. A man of true poetic genius must have some claim to respect; but his defects of general intelligence may be as noticeable as his genius. On the contrary, the range of Goethe's mind was so extensive, that comparatively little is said of him when it is merely said that he was a great poet. He was certainly first of all a poet, and one belonging to no ordinary class. Certain French critics have found out that he “really was not a great poet”—that is to say, not a great poet in their own sense of the term—but their opinion hardly deserves any further notice.

Poetic genius, as possessed by Goethe, was nature. His inspiration visited him, and for certain seasons dwelt with him, just as the thoughts and feelings inspired by nature dwell in the heart of a child. When eighty years old, he received from certain friends a present consisting mostly of

artistic bijouterie. "They treat me very kindly"—said he, while arranging on a table the several "gems" or trinkets—"they know what I like."—"They know what you are—a child," said his daughter-in-law, then acting as his house-keeper. Her words expressed a truth beyond the range of her own intention. The old man was not a child because he loved works of art. Still, however, he remained a child to whom art was nature, and nature was art. Of his poetry hardly anything has been said better than these few words written by Falk—one of his personal friends—"His poetry was identified with himself. In dream-like contemplation, his mind was transmuted into a perfect likeness to the object contemplated." "Of modern poets Goethe is at once the most subjective and the most objective." This saying—often repeated—may be objectionable as regards its paradoxical form; but at the same time it is true. The poet, in receiving impressions from nature, imbues them with his own feelings. Hence the result is subjective, and some elements merely accidental or individual are mingled with the poetry. These are cleared away, and now the result is objective—poetry that awakens common sympathy. The following impromptu, written in 1789, may illustrate our meaning :—

"Hush'd now is every bird's sweet lay
In the day's calm close;
The trees are all asleep; how still
Is the light green leaf on the topmost spray!
And, list as you will, you hear not a trill
In the woodland lone.
O wait, my soul! and soon, repose
Like this will be your own."

Is it the poet's own feeling, or a sentiment breathed forth, as it were, out of the woodland, that is here expressed?—"The poet's feeling, of course," says a scientific and prosaic critic; "there can be no feeling in the woodland." This is exact science; and by way of contrast it makes clear the nature of poetry. The poet knows

nothing of that hard and fast line so firmly drawn between nature and the mind. All living creatures around him are at rest. As they belong to nature, so does the poet. He feels that the eventide quietude soothes his heart; and hopes that soon he shall share more largely in that deep repose. Poetry of the purest type knows nothing of the divisions denoted by such contrasted terms as subjective and objective, finite and infinite, material and spiritual. For the poet outward things are all words inspired by one mind; all nature lives, thinks, and feels with him; stars, rivers, flowers, trees—even rocks and old ruins—have their thoughts and feelings, which at the same time are the poet's own. "He finds," says Goethe, "a brotherhood of creatures like himself in the still and silent wood, the water, and the air." The same feeling is often expressed by Wordsworth.

The idea of which poetry is an expression has led many men of a meditative temperament into mysticism. "Can the speculative idea be altogether false,"—says Steffens, a poetical though scientific man—"the idea that in poetry of the highest class is always supposed to be true, at least so long as our serious interest in the poetry remains?"—It is clear that such a study of poetry as is suggested by this question might lead to mysticism. It is not equally clear, that the study of poetry may indirectly serve as an introduction to sober religious inquiry; yet there is no good reason for doubting the fact. It is not incapable of explanation when we consider how poetry must first be read or heard, in order to be enjoyed. It is demanded that the reader shall for a time assume a habitude of mind comparatively passive, and be capable of giving a quiet and continuous attention, either to the development of a story, or to the evolution of a sentiment, as the case may be. Sustained attention, or contemplation—this is the habitude of mind demanded. But this is the opposite of reasoning, which requires such processes as dividing, comparing and differing. The intellectual life of modern days consists in too large a proportion of mere reasonings, that

in the end amount to nothing more than exercises of the understanding. The study of natural history, or even of physical geography—in fact, almost any study that may lead us out of ourselves—may have the healthful influence that has sometimes been ascribed to the study of true poetry. Little more can be said here of Goethe's poetry; but one fact is not to be forgotten. That "wise passiveness" which we have noticed in his relation to nature, was a habitude of mind continued also when his studies were the characters of men and women, as developed in social life.

Here we turn to consider next the range of the poet's studies. It was indeed wide on the whole; yet in some directions rather closely limited. Among the *limitations* observed in Goethe's range of studies some were prescribed by a habitude of mind for which we can hardly find a familiar term. It might be called a love of delitescence. "In this great world," he said, on one occasion, "it is to make a little world for one's self." Accordingly, he made it a rule to avoid matters—especially if painful or troublesome—that could not afford aid in his self-culture. One of his favourite words—"Behagen"—often used to denote his own satisfaction, has a meaning hardly more sublime than that belonging to our own word "comfort." His love of quietude—not idleness—has been called "egotism," and has moreover sometimes been confused with selfishness of the ordinary type. This is an error, and has led to another on the opposite side, for in defending Goethe, his friends have said rather too much of certain kind actions that, for one in his easy circumstances, were hardly proofs of heroism. As regards his expenditure in acts of beneficence, there is really little that is remarkable to be said.

In his *psychological observation* of human characters—those lying within a certain range—the poet excelled; above all, when he was led to notice the minor traits and finer shades of sentiment. Examples may be found almost anywhere in his chief works of prose-fiction. Of the sentences

quoted below, several have been selected from a novel of which the general tendency has been censured :—

“Every sign of politeness indicates a substance—a true feeling—in which the sign had its origin. A good education should show how the sign and the substance—the inner and the outer—are united. There is a politeness of the heart; and this is nearly related to love. Hence flows the true grace of exterior courtesy.—It is easy to act in concert with our feelings; hard to obey strict rules, however good. We practice virtue consciously and with effort; but we transgress unawares and easily. Hence our virtues yield us little pleasure, while our faults—often repeated—cause much annoyance. When we look to other men, hoping they will give us moral aid, they leave us to help ourselves.—Voluntary dependence is a happy way of living; but is not possible without love. Nobody is more a slave than the man who asserts his freedom, when he is not free. His own assertion reminds him that he is dependent. Let him willingly admit his dependence; and he will feel himself free. Intellectual freedom and ‘enlightenment,’ if left without the aid of moral self-control, will only make a man more dangerous.—There is but one feeling—love in some degree—that can save us from envy, when this might be excited by the presence of a superior man. When estimated by his own valet, the great man is not a hero. This however shows nothing more than the fact, that the valet is not a hero [This saying, commonly ascribed to Goethe, has been ascribed also to Hegel].—Men who, for the rest of their lives, are utterly worldly regard religion as something that may be useful in a time of misfortune. In their estimation, truth itself can serve only as an occasional dose of medicine.—After all our reasonings, we are guided by the sentiment most prevalent in our heart. Let us first be careful that we have a disposition to know the truth; then right thoughts will be sure to follow.—What is holy?—That which unites many souls as one, though it bind them but lightly, as a rush binds a garland.—What is holiest?—That which—more and more deeply felt—more and more closely unites the souls of men.”

As briefly as possible would we pass over personal details relating to Goethe’s practical notions of *morals*, especially those most closely connected with the highest interests of society. At Weimar, in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, the notion of making culture a substitute for morality prevailed so far, that the results were injurious to the characters of both men and women. The facts—too well-known—to which we but slightly allude, are partly

reflected in Goethe's writings—especially in the novel describing the results of an unhappy marriage, and strangely entitled "*Wahlverwandtschaften*" (Elective Affinities). For its want of a proper reserve, it has been justly censured, though the author declared that, when writing it, his intention was to defend the institution of marriage. The suffering following guilt is described so that pity must be excited. "But this pity"—says Gelzer, a truthful yet lenient critic—"may too probably lead to rebellious feeling against the moral order by whose authority the suffering has been justly inflicted. How much better might the result have been, had the guilty passion been suppressed as soon as its existence was known! Then victory would have followed a voluntary sacrifice, and the author—whose poetry has sometimes made attractive that which leads to evil—might have employed his genius to make a moral victory glorious."

The next point to be noticed is the vexed question—already mooted—respecting the poet's religious sentiments. The word "sentiments" is here used advisedly. Strictly speaking, he had no system in his thoughts and impressions concerning religion. It was a topic, however, on which he often conversed; and it is interesting to know something of the more serious thoughts to which he was led in the later years of his life. Especially we would notice the following two questions:—Do his latest expressions, relating to religion, accord altogether with his early and almost scornful rejection of historical Christianity?—Or do they rather tend to support our opinion, that the passages we have quoted from his "*Years of Travel*" may be accepted as confessions of his own sentiments? In favour of the latter conclusion there remain a few facts to be noticed.

Sentiments may be true, though they have neither the firmness nor the clear definition of a positive faith; and they may be sincere, though they are not always expressed with much care to maintain a rigid consistency as regards their several forms of expression. In many instances, the

poet's observations on religious topics were occasional. He spoke earnestly at times ; but often so as merely to indicate the character of his impressions—not to assert any fixed opinions. Health, poetic genius, and good temper—these were the chief elements of his own happiness ; and they suggested the optimistic tone of his natural religion, sometimes called “pantheism ”—of which he could give no clear definition. He had at all times an intuitive belief in the supernatural, and could support it—so he thought—by reference to several passages in his own experience. He believed in the immortality of the soul ; “because nature,” he said, “wastes no power.” Accordingly, when his friend Wieland died—eighty years old—the poet consoled himself by thinking, that a man so industrious would never cease to act somewhere and in some way. It might have been objected, that the deceased author had said all that he had to say—and considerably more ; for he was a great borrower from the works of other authors.

Many of the best remarks made by Goethe were such as were accidentally elicited in the course of conversation with his friends. On many occasions his own impressions were freely communicated ; but he could, when he chose, maintain a strict reserve, and when queries respecting his religious views were too intrusive—as he thought—he could reply in a way that might be called evasive. An instance of this kind may be noticed here.

One of the truest of the poet's friends,—in the time of his youth—was Leopold von Stolberg, of whom some account has been given (pp. 124-6). He died in 1819, and some years later his sister Augusta wrote to Goethe a letter containing the following passages :—

“Lately I have been reading over again your letters addressed to us, years ago, when my departed brother and myself enjoyed the happiness of your friendship. Reading them has recalled to mind the days of our youth, and the thought has been suggested :—Must all the good sentiments of that time fall like the blossoms of Spring ; and must no fruit—no good result—follow ? . . . Then I have thought

of writing to you once more, and—having resolved to do so—I find, in the last of your letters, some words that may serve as an excuse for my writing. You say in one passage—‘Save me from myself.’ Surely, no power of rendering any such service could ever be mine. But pardon me, dear Goethe, if I am assuming too great a liberty when I pray—that you will save yourself. Let me implore you to cast away all that is worldly, little and vain; and turn with your whole heart and mind toward that which is heavenly and eternal. Much has been given you; great talents have been entrusted to your stewardship.—How have I been grieved to find in some of your writings tendencies that may lead men astray. Oh, make this good, while yet it is day; while you can still work. Pray for divine aid, and it will be given. Pardon me for writing so freely. My thoughts now are all of the future [of soon again meeting friends departed]. I could not die peacefully if I neglected the duty of opening my heart to you—the friend of my youth. I should like to carry with me a hope of meeting you again—*there*. Do not reject the prayer of one to whom in bygone years you addressed such words as ‘my friend,’ and ‘my sister.’ I shall still pray for you. . . . My Saviour is yours.”

The pious lady wrote that letter in October 1822. The poet’s reply—written in April 1823—is remarkable as an example of his *reserve*—one of the leading traits in his character, and one most noticeable as regards both politics and religion. On certain occasions, and in relation to certain topics, it was his wish that his friends should write and speak in accordance with his own habit of reserve. He writes thus to the sister of his early friend:—

“To live long is to outlive much of our early experience; indeed we outlive ourselves. Time robs us of much that was once called our own. Yet the loss may be sustained without excessive grief, if we always keep in view that which does not pass away. For myself and for others, my chief intention through all my life has been honest; and in the midst of the things called earthly, I have endeavoured to keep in view our highest aim in life. And you and yours have doubtless done the same. So let us go on working while yet it is day with us. Others will follow, and will also enjoy for a time the light of the sun, when for us a light still clearer will be shining. Let us then go on—not caring too anxiously for the future. In our Father’s kingdom there are many provinces; and since he has given us here so fair a

dwelling, he will doubtless take good care of us both in our future state of existence. There perhaps we shall understand each other better; and therefore shall love each other more.

"I have some fear lest my reply should offend you. I remember how once—without intention—I offended your late dear brother, when I addressed to him a letter that, in its general purport, was not unlike this now addressed to yourself. However, this letter shall be sent, if it be only to assure you that I am convalescent. The illness through which I have lately passed has been dangerous; but now I feel myself again returning to life. Once more the Almighty allows me to behold the light of his sun.—May we all, at last, find ourselves re-united in the embrace of our all-loving Father!"

Evidence as various as that already noticed makes it seem difficult to come to any general conclusion respecting Goethe's views of religion. He did not like close definitions; nor any such dilemmas as are introduced by the terms "either . . . or." It was not his intention to write so as to make clear his belief as one that ought to be received or could be understood by "all men." On the contrary, his writings were intended—so he tells us—to be acceptable only to some few readers whose characters were more or less like his own.

Education and religion should alike be founded on reverence. This is perhaps the best summary of Goethe's highest teaching. In his far-advanced years, he often spoke of the Christian faith in reverential terms—not accordant with the tone of his early rejection—and it is noticeable that he spoke also with reverence of certain tenets called "mysteries."

"I am"—said he, on one occasion—"no admirer of 'popular philosophy.' There are found, in philosophy as well as in religion, mysteries of which no exposition should be intruded on the people. They should not be invited to study deep truths; nor should they be taught to deride everything that they cannot understand. . . . There is prevalent in our day an erroneous tendency, of which the ultimate results are not yet seen—it is the main tendency of 'popular philosophy.' The mysteries of faith are submitted to the

scrutiny of the understanding ; and all that it cannot comprehend is rejected as false. . . . Thus you will nowadays often enough find a man intelligent in his way, yet coarse and ignorant to a degree, who will pour out his contempt on tenets that would have been named with reverence by such men as Kant and Jacobi. . . . This 'popular philosophy' will lead to no good. . . . Let the precepts that all should obey be made clear ; and let mysteries be reserved as under a veil of reverence. . . . Let them no more be made the butt of vulgar ridicule."*

Some doubts have been suggested respecting the exact correctness of Falk, from whose reports of conversations with Goethe the above passages are quoted. There will remain no doubt respecting their substantial truthfulness, when they are compared with other evidence having the same purport. It is indeed probable that Falk has here and there expanded some of the remarks really made by Goethe. Thus some suspicion of fictitious enlargement might be excited by the account given of the poet's demonology ; or by that of his monadology. The latter especially seems too much elaborated ; but there can be no reason for doubting the main facts stated in these reports. The poet's own doctrine of monads was one mostly like that here asserted ; and his belief in "demonic influence" is too well-known to require any further proof. Of course it is understood, that the word "demonic," when Goethe made use of it, had for the most part its older and larger meaning [*δαίμων* = *Lat.* genius].

Reverential views of Christianity were expressed by the poet, not now and then only, but often in his later years. This is a fact that does not rest on the veracity of Falk, or any other individual, but may be established by evidences too numerous to be formally cited here. These brief examples may however be given :—

"The highest praise is due to Christianity, whose pure and noble

* Johannes D. Falk, "Goethe aus näherem persönlichem Umgange dargestellt ;" S. 82 u. s. w.

origin is made evident by its power of self-restoration. Again and again, after times of depression—consequences of human error—this religion reappears in such institutions as missions and fraternities; and thus again makes manifest its own true character, while affording the spiritual aid that society requires. . . . We know not how low mankind—if left without that aid—might descend in their irreligious egotism. . . . The Christian Religion has strength in itself. From age to age that strength has been exerted, to lift up fallen and suffering humanity. With such facts as it has on its side, this religion cannot require the aid of philosophy; but must hold an independent and sublime position—one far above all philosophy.”

If again a question arise respecting any more definite affirmation of belief, the reply must be one that can be confirmed by the poet's own words. It should, however, be always remembered, that his words are not often precise when he is speaking of his own religious tenets. One fact is clear: he could not in his youth accept the Augustinian doctrine of original sin, and the inevitable consequences of that doctrine. At that time he once had an intention of becoming a member of the society of “United Brethren;” and for some time he might be called one of their disciples. Thus he was led to study their doctrine, and moreover the opposite teaching of Pelagius. It was the latter that most attracted him; for this was in substance a doctrine almost identical with his own belief, though he was not then conscious of the coincidence. On further consideration, he abandoned his intention of joining the society. The reasons assigned for this decision are characteristic:—“On every side,” he says, “I felt myself drawn back toward nature. She had already appeared to me in all her glory. Then I had found [among such people as were called ‘worldly’] many friends who were excellent practical men. How could I forsake them? . . . There was now a gulf between my own views and the creed of my pious friends; and I could not remain longer in any way connected with their society. . . . Yet the extent of the difference existing between us was not clearly understood until they assured me that my opinions were ‘Pelagian.’ . . . My next idea was to con-

struct for myself a Christianity that might serve for my own edification. It has always been my way, to turn into poetry whatever is most interesting in my experience. A wish to connect with a poetical story my own notions of religion now led me to select for a subject the 'Wandering Jew.' " *

These are but a few among many remarks that might be cited to justify the conclusion already suggested (pp. 128-9)—that Goethe's general notion of human nature was very much like the definition called Pelagian. Let the word be accepted in a liberal sense; and it will serve to denote the trait most salient in his religious notions. Special objections to this conclusion may be found; but they can serve only to confirm the fact already noticed—that he was not careful always to sustain a rigid coherence in expressions of opinion. He was, as we have said, well acquainted with the unhappy duality of human nature; yet it does not follow that he ever knew and felt, as a profound and permanent conviction, the truth of St. Augustine's teaching. To thousands of intelligent men living in the eighteenth century it was a doctrine peculiarly repulsive. This fact serves to account for—as consequent—the Pelagian notions so widely spread at that time. Speaking freely or without care for theological precision—it may be affirmed that, for many freethinkers, Pelagian error—though otherwise named—was the basis of belief.

Goethe knew something—not a little—of man's nature and its sinfulness; yet not enough to lead to a belief utterly opposed to that most prevalent in his time. At one time he observes, that "the demonic forces in man [*i.e.* his passions] must be strictly held under control;" on another occasion he adds, "extreme strictness tends to make a man melancholy;" then follow other remarks on moderation, that may be called Horatian rather than Christian. He had not apparently such a profound conviction of sin as

* "Dichtung und Wahrheit," Th. iii, Buch 15.

could lead him—in the palmy days of rationalism and optimism—to accept as true anything like orthodox teaching respecting man's fall and recovery. He had not such a sense of man's misery as could lead him to accept any such notions as already (in 1814) were entertained by his friend Schopenhauer—notions that soon led the latter to accept as true the chief tenet of primitive Buddhism. In matters of faith, the height and security of the superstructure must be proportionate with the depth and strength of the foundation. There is a faith that arises out of despair. Now Goethe was a man capable of deep thoughts ; but he did not always follow in the way toward which they were leading him. He loved chiefly all that was gentle, beautiful and refined in the Gospels ; and was never tired of praising the parables. There are passages in his poetry where his meaning may be accepted by certain readers as pantheistic ; and by others as Christian. That nature—as seen all around us—was created good and holy ; and was intended to reflect the Creator's likeness ; that the same may be said of human nature ; and that traces of the original idea may still be seen in the world we live in, and in our own life—in the innocence and docility of childhood, the amiability of youth, and the quietude of domestic life—all these were tenets cheerfully accepted in his naturalistic and poetical religion. He liked to view everything moral or religious, just as he would view a flower, or any other beautiful production of nature ; and he found in Christian history and doctrine not a little that he could accept as divinely human. Accordingly, the parables narrated in the Gospels are well described in his words—"natural, human, and familiar ; but also divine."

But less welcome was the thought, against which he could not securely "fortify" his mind, that a principle, dark, mysterious and rebellious, has intruded itself into this universe ; once a temple consecrated to the worship of God. The term "fortify" is one often employed by himself ; he would sometimes recommend that peace of mind should be

guarded by certain limitations which he called "lines of fortification." Much more might be said of his habit of reserve—or rather of his suppression of unwelcome thoughts, even when they were suggested by unquestioned facts. He wrote much, and often talked freely; yet he seldom expressed his deepest thoughts. He did not allow them to lead him into inquiries too difficult. This habit of mind led to his comparatively slight notice of many questions called metaphysical; and it led also to a partial suppression of certain inquiries called religious. He could not make himself a "rationalist" of the extreme school; he knew too much of the problem proposed in the opening of "Faust."

How far was he led toward faith by his study of the problem? So far as that poem—the end of Part II—is accepted as evidence, or, to use own word, as a "confession" of his belief; so far the question has been answered. Every man must be saved, he says, by his own faithful and persevering endeavour to do good; especially by the general beneficence of his life. This answer to the question of man's destiny is good so far as it goes; but is it complete and satisfactory?

Whatever may have been its extent, the poet's rejection or neglect of Christianity has sometimes been described in terms too general. He recognized in the ethics of the Gospels a teaching that might be called divine. The doctrine that he especially rejected is that often called Augustinian; and his rejection was—as he supposed—justified by his experience, and his knowledge of human nature. The denial expressed so boldly in the letter addressed to Lavater (in 1781) was subsequently moderated, so far as regards its tone. One question still remains to be noticed. Was Goethe's denial in 1781 an echo of the negation then prevalent? Or was it the expression of his own conviction after deliberate inquiry?

It may be objected, that his judgment of Christian evidence could have but little value in cases requiring special hurrying. There is however one class of evidences to which

the objection does not apply. It is not learning, but the divinatory insight of genius that is required to recognize as true and unique a portraiture of which the lines are drawn by several hands. In estimating the value of certain internal evidences—those observed in the undesigned yet coincident traits of several writers—a man of poetic genius will probably have some facility, at least in one case, when the coincident traits belong to the portraiture of a single character; and especially when the expansion of ideas and sympathies is extraordinary. There is no evidence to show that Goethe ever made any elaborate inquiry of the kind here suggested. Little that is definite is told of the reasonings by which he was led to the negation expressed in 1781. The commonplace argument against miracles might have some weight with him; but he knew that one miracle remains intact—the world has been overcome; and the religion in question has been accepted as the faith of many millions. He knew that such great results cannot be fairly ascribed to any ordinary causes. Moreover, he has indirectly confessed that his own convictions led him, in his later years, near to a confession of the truth. His expressions of reverence are as deep and sincere, as are his sentiments of admiration elicited by Christ's own teaching; but these—however true—cannot supply the place of a direct reply, when the question is one relating to belief and submission. Were such neutrality possible or allowable, there might be found in reserve some proof of caution; or prudence might recommend that a direct reply should be indefinitely postponed. Thus between faith and unbelief an intermediate position might be occupied. But it would be not unlike that chosen by one who places himself midway between two hostile lines, both advancing toward their final contest. To hold such a position is impossible. In a time of peace there is granted an extension of freedom that cannot be allowed in the time of warfare. Nothing contained in the four Gospels is made more prominent than the sole alternative of confession or denial.

Already a considerable space has been required in order that the truth respecting the influence of Goethe's writings might on both sides be fairly represented. Sentiments not often openly pronounced, or sharply defined, but mostly expressed indirectly, cannot be correctly reproduced in the shape of a few dogmatic words—made popular only because they are one-sided. There must be left open some questions that cannot here be discussed. One may be briefly noticed:—Could such men as Goethe and Schiller be controlled by the spirit of their age?—There should be no hesitation in giving an affirmative reply. It was a time of great power—however exerted; for good or for evil. Influence—moral, social, and intellectual—then spread itself, as with the speed of an epidemic; and the results are seen everywhere—in philosophy and philanthropy; in poetry and music, as we are reminded by the names of Haydn and Mozart; in educational plans, including one for returning to “a state of nature;” in the study of occult sciences and mystic theories; in the order of the “Illuminati,” and other secret societies; in schemes of all kinds—often fraudulent—not forgetting certain “Rosicrucian mysteries,” that never existed. Rationalism was the negative movement of the time; but had a supposed positive aim, which was to sweep away religion, that something vague, described as “humanitarian,” might take its place. That age knew everything, excepting that which ought to be known. Our authority for this conclusion may be given in the shape of a final quotation from Goethe's own writings: they contain nothing more valuable than the following words:—

“There is one thing that no man brings with him into the world; yet this is the principle on which all depends, if he would develop himself on all sides, and so make himself truly a man. . . . What is the principle?—Reverence. . . . Unwillingly does a man yield himself to the influence of this feeling. It is a higher sense that must be conferred on his nature; though in some few favoured men it seems to develop itself as it were naturally. Men so endowed

[and having the power of awakening the feeling in others] have in all ages been esteemed as saints, or even as gods. . . . In reverence consists the dignity, the essential character of genuine religion.”*

This passage is a protest against the spirit of the time when Goethe and Schiller received that education which is never forgotten. It was an irreverent and intolerant spirit that was then dominant—especially during the period of Schiller’s poetic career. Though naturally a proud man, he was often led by others, when he supposed himself to be walking alone. It was not his better genius that led him away from poetry and religion into rationalism. Near the close of his life, he confessed indirectly, that he did not like the change. How could he, or his many-minded friend, like that drear “illuminated world” of their time—“a land of darkness, and of the shadow of death; without any order, and where the light is as darkness?” How could they—two genuine poets—lend the aid of their genius, in any way or to any extent, to make dim the brightest ideal light that ever shone in this world?

The question is one that cannot be readily answered. The fact, however, remains; in their neglect of Christianity they were more or less controlled by the general tendency of their age. For them religion was not a subject to which their studious hours were chiefly devoted. They found their most pleasant occupation in the discussion of questions belonging to æsthetic-ethic culture—a study to which Schiller especially ascribed much importance. To support these general conclusions, we refer to the whole of their correspondence during the decennium 1794-1804.

* “Wanderjahre;” Buch ii, Cap. I.

CHAPTER XIII.

SCHILLER.

In the intellectual and ethical character of Goethe, *expansion, variety, and comprehensive sympathy* are—we might almost say—*excessive*. In Schiller's mind the height is more remarkable than the expanse. In Goethe's best poems art and nature, thought and its symbol, are united, fused and welded together. In Schiller's poetry we find division. There is a visible strife between the thought and its symbol. The idea seems to be discontented with its incorporation, and endeavours, again and again, to assert itself in an abstract form. The poet first fixes his attention on some noble thought, and then proceeds to find imagery for its expression; but, after all his endeavour, the thought is left too often solitary or abstract, as if too pure and high to be incorporated.

Schiller is not contented with his vocation as a poet. He has an earnest desire to teach; and his favourite theme is freedom. He has educated himself, and now wishes to spread the influence of his later convictions, and so to counteract the errors encouraged by his revolutionary fervour in the time of his youth.

These few words may be accepted as representing fairly the moral aim most prevalent in Schiller's didactic writings. His faith and perseverance were alike remarkable. Against all the discouragements of his time the poet of freedom maintained his own faith in opposition to error spread by some "philosophers" in the eighteenth century. He held that freedom could never come from without to any man or to any nation.

It may be asked, did Schiller give due attention to the historical fact, that the idea of freedom for all men was first introduced to the world by the Christian Religion? However that may be, it is clear that he had no faith in changes produced by superficial politics. He was more practical than some grave men who have talked derisively of his "poetical dreams." His poems, the "Eleusinian Festival" and the "Song of the Bell" suggest a future poetry in harmony with life and culture. He endeavoured to widen his own sympathies when he was drawing near the close of his career; and he was then most conscious of his own defects.

From his philosophical essays and letters, his poems and his life, there shines out a noble ideal of a poet's mission. He must not be content—we are told—either with dreams or with so-called realities; he must not think that his duty is fulfilled by declamation against the errors of the world. He must forfeit neither the real nor the ideal; but must see good in the contradiction between them, as it is the condition of faith and activity.

Schiller was the ideal man of his time. As regards his unbelief, he must be classed with the more respectable rationalists. But he is the noblest man of all who belonged to their school; and he is but little indebted to their dreary teaching. Its practical defects were observed by the thoughtful poet, when he drew nigh to the close of his life. So well is his biography known that here a brief outline will suffice.

JOHANN CHRISTOPH FRIEDRICH VON SCHILLER was born at Marbach, November 10, 1759. His father, a lieutenant in the army, held an appointment as park-keeper at the Solitude, a country-seat where the Duke of Würtemberg, in 1770, established a military academy, which, in 1775, was removed to Stuttgart. In this school the young poet was educated. In 1779 the duke conducted an examination of the academy, when Goethe was present. For Schiller the result of the examination was a disappointment. He had spent about seven years at the school, and hoped soon to

gain liberty; but it was thought advisable that his studies should be continued during another year. In this time (1780) he completed his first tragedy "The Robbers"—a wild, dramatic rhapsody, revolutionary in its tendency.

After leaving the school, Schiller—who had slightly studied medicine—gained an appointment, with a mean salary, as medical assistant in one of the duke's regiments. Meanwhile his play was brought out at Mannheim, and with such success that he soon forgot both medicine and military discipline. Without asking for leave of absence, he went to Mannheim, to enjoy there the popularity of his own work. For this offence he suffered a fortnight's arrest. Soon afterwards, discussions on the merits of the play led to some disputes on politics, and, on this occasion, the duke gave orders that Schiller should write no more plays. The poet—believing that dramatic authorship was his vocation—now escaped from Stuttgart (1782) and returned to Mannheim. Here he was but coldly received by the manager of the theatre. All the poet's hopes of success were founded on a manuscript play—"Fiesco"—but the manager disliked it. Wishing to place himself at a greater distance from his former patron, Schiller now went on to Frankfort, where he tried in vain to sell some manuscript poems, and was left in almost destitute circumstances. He next found a more obscure retreat in a village where, seated in a miserable chamber, with the wind blowing through a window patched with paper, he wrote some scenes of a new play. Soon afterwards he availed himself of an invitation from a lady—Fran von Wolzogen—the mother of two young men who had been his fellow-students at Stuttgart. In her house he found shelter during the winter of 1782-3, and here completed his third drama. In 1783 he gained a small salary by his services as poet to the theatre at Mannheim. His own ideal theory of the drama was not realized here. Several disagreeable circumstances led him to resign his connection with the theatre; and he was thinking of forsaking literature, when he received aid from a friend—Körner, the

father of the young poet who fell in the war of liberation. By the aid of this friend he was enabled to live and pursue his studies from 1785 to 1787, when he went to Weimar. At that time Goethe was travelling in Italy; but soon after his return he gained for Schiller an appointment as professor of history at Jena. For several years after their first interview (1788), the two poets, though meeting now and then, were but slightly acquainted with each other.

Meanwhile, during the years 1785-89, Schiller's first enthusiastic notions of freedom had been moderated, and had found a nobler form of expression in "Don Carlos," his fourth drama, which was completed in 1787. The poet's historical studies supplied the materials for his works, "The Revolt of the Netherlands" and a "History of the Thirty Years' War." After his appointment at Jena, he devoted not a little of his time to Kant's philosophy, and endeavoured to unite it with a theory of poetry and art. The results are seen in the "Letters on *Æsthetic Education*," and in the essays, "On Grace and Dignity," "On the Sublime," and "On Naïve and Sentimental Poetry." His studies were now and then relieved by holidays spent at Rudolstadt, where he became acquainted with Charlotte von Lengefeld, whom he married in 1790. His happiness was interrupted in 1791 by a failure of health, which compelled him to seek repose. The expenditure caused by loss of health led to straitened circumstances, from which he was rescued by two generous friends, from whom he received annually, for three years, an income of about £200. This placed him in easy circumstances, and enabled him to spend some time among the scenes of his boyhood.

Schiller's political views were now no longer represented by his early plays. Meanwhile their fame had won for him the title of "citoyen français," granted by the National Convention (in 1792) to the author, who, in the diploma, is strangely called "Mr. Gillès." It may be presumed that, at the time when this honour was conferred, no one in Paris knew the fact that Schiller had

meditated writing and sending to Paris "a defence of Louis the Sixteenth." The poet—like many other men—had dreamed of an Utopia to be founded on negation; but from this dream he was soon awakened. As early as 1794 he said:—"The French Republic will fall into anarchy, and anarchy must end in submission to a despot, who will extend his sway over the greater part of Europe." In 1795 Goethe and Schiller, who were then united by a firm bond of friendship, planned the "Xenien," a series of satirical epigrams. The allied poets gained, at the time, more fame by these epigrams than by their better writings. Schiller's finest ballads—each inspired by some noble idea—and his most elaborate drama, "Wallenstein," were all written in the course of three years—the time when his studies were most severe. In 1800 he wrote the drama "Maria Stuart," which was soon followed by "the Maid of Orleans." An experiment, that could hardly be called a success, was made when Schiller introduced the antique Greek chorus in "the Bride of Messina" (1803). This was followed by "Wilhelm Tell" (1804), in which the poet gave free expression to his thoughts on national freedom. The enthusiastic first reception of this drama was but the beginning of a general and long-continued success. The enthusiasm spread itself, as with electric energy, and was powerful in alliance with other agencies that had their issue in the war of liberation.

In May, 1804, Schiller paid a visit to Berlin. Though only forty-four years old, his health was now rapidly failing. He had been an invalid for several years, and this fact makes his success in literature the more remarkable. His consciousness of warfare between mind and body is reflected in several of his letters. In one he exclaims:—"Miserable man! with thoughts and hopes soaring to the heavens, yet tied down to this clod of earth; this tiresome clock-work of the body!"—In another he writes:—"Now that I have established in my mind such principles of art that I might—if spared—do something great and good, my physical

constitution is threatened by decay. Well; if it must be so—if the house must fall to ruins—I have rescued from the fall all that is worth saving.”—The disease—pulmonary consumption—left for the sufferer one consolation—clearness of intellect. During the last few months of his life he wrote a beautiful masque, and some parts of a tragedy. He was, in fact, dying when he wrote, in April, 1805, some passages in “*Demetrius*.” In the following month his life’s work was ended. He died in the afternoon of the ninth of May.

Schiller’s works may be classified as belonging respectively to three periods in his short life:—youth, middle-life, and the last decennium. Their chief characteristics are all to be considered as expressions of the poet’s own character. He was at once a poet and a theorist. He made his imaginative power serve as a means of education. His earliest crude notion of liberty was expressed in “the Robbers,” which at first excited such extravagant admiration. “If Germany is ever to have a Shakespeare, here he is!” said one fanatic. “If I might create a world,” said another fanatic, “on the condition that ‘the Robbers’ should appear in that world, I would not create it!” The fact is, that the first three plays written by Schiller must be judged as crude productions of youth. A time of transition in the author’s moral education gave rise to his fourth drama, “*Don Carlos*.” But here the character of the Marquis of Posa is a fiction invented to give expression to the poet’s own sentiment of liberty. After the completion of this fourth drama, the author—during some years of his middle life—became more and more reflective, and devoted his studies mostly to history and philosophy. He returned to poetry in 1794, wrote his finest ballads (1797-8), and completed the historical tragedy “*Wallenstein*” in 1799. Of all his imaginative works this has the most extensive and imposing design. The subject of his next drama was another difficult historical character—“*Maria Stuart*.” Her imputed guilt is here cast into the shade by sympathy with

her sorrows. The motive of the play entitled "the Maid of Orleans" is noble. The poet could believe what Voltaire could not imagine; that hatred of oppression may with sincerity assume the character of inspiration. It must however be regretted that he partly contradicted his own design by inventing an attachment, described as existing between the heroic maiden and an Englishman—an enemy of France! Why should such a weakness have been thought possible?

During his last decennium Schiller wrote all his best "Ballads," in which a desire to teach is harmonized more or less perfectly with the laws of poetic art. In the comparatively few poems written during the reflective period of middle-life, a didactic tendency prevails. Here we find in "the Artists," and in "the Gods of Greece," traces of an endeavour to unite poetry and philosophy. To that endeavour may be ascribed the partly didactic tone heard—not without the attendant music of true poetry—in "the Eleusinian Festival," "the Walk," and "the Song of the Bell." These are all intended to teach, while they charm the reader. The poet wishes to analyze and systematize his thoughts; and he has an earnest desire to teach. One of his chief doctrines is to the effect, that the study of art may give aid—important though indirect—in the process of our moral education. Goodness and beauty ought to live in union, he tells us, and the study of beauty may lead to a love of goodness.

"Schiller"—it has often been said—"is the poet of liberty."—True; so far as any brief saying of the kind can be true. Yet it is vague; for among all words noticeable for their variations of meaning, few can compare with the word "freedom." In its lowest sense, it is loudly enough proclaimed in the poet's first play—"the Robbers." In a far higher sense, he afterwards accepted the idea of freedom, and made it clear in his latest and best writings. Indeed it is hardly too much to say, that his later studies—in history, poetry, and philosophy—were for the most part controlled by his constant endeavour to make clear the idea of freedom.

Hence several of his most genial critics—partly guided by truth, partly by enthusiasm—have regarded him as the seer who predicted for the German people the freedom that was won by their arms soon after his decease :—

“He was a seer, a prophet.”—“A century has passed since his birth, and we revere him as one of the first among the spiritual heroes of humanity. A hundred years may roll away ; another and yet another ; still from century to century his name shall be celebrated, and at last there shall come a festival when men will say :—‘ See ! there was truth in his ideal anticipations of freedom and civilization.’ ”*

In youth, Schiller was one of the many who hailed the idea of a violent revolution. But during his later life he educated himself, and became convinced of the truth, that freedom, left without good moral culture, must end in anarchy. When he came near the close of his life, he was apparently led on unconsciously toward the admission of a most important doctrine—that true liberty and Christianity are closely related. The indirect evidence of this tendency in Schiller’s later studies may be noticed more distinctly in another place. Here may be added only a few words respecting the general value of such evidence.

Poets often say more than they intend to say. As regards Schiller, this is especially true. The creed unconsciously confessed by his genius was better than his doctrine of a cold and stone-dead morality, borrowed from the writings of Kant. There is here and there a true Christian ethos in Schiller’s poetry. It is earnest, and often expresses the deepest sentiments of his heart. With him there exists no wide separation between poetry and belief. There are found here and there in his later poems passages well according with the sentiment expressed in one of his letters (written in 1804) :—“The time we live in ought to suggest to the men of Berlin, that the tone of their philosophy should now be more reverent.”—Soon after the poet’s

* Friedrich Vischer ; Speech at the Centenary Festival of Schiller’s Birthday (1859).

decease (1805), Fichte delivered in Berlin the lectures in which he rebuked the pert irreverence that had too long been fashionable. His doctrine was accordant with the poet's sentiment, though one was not suggested by the other (pp. 187-8).

Sentiment and reasoning are obviously distinct; yet both may be well grounded in one truth, and may lead to one result. When the eighteenth century had developed its tendencies, a reversion of feeling took place among thoughtful men. They felt that the world had now heard enough of denial and destruction; and they almost longed—especially those who lived in Berlin—to find something better than the knowingness and frivolity of the age. Elsewhere the same sentiment was prevalent; and in many cases it might be fairly regarded as only a natural result of the “reign of terror.” In Schiller it was the result of advanced self-culture. He was a man of his time—at least in his early days; and he always retained his love of political freedom. In his philosophical writings, he endeavoured to make attractive the cold abstractions of Kantian morals and the doctrine of personal independence. He was a proud man; or to say the least, he was independent, even to a fault. It is therefore noteworthy, when he speaks with distrust of the proud and independent philosophy that he had too long studied; and when he expresses a fear, lest freethinking people should be left at last to enjoy their liberty—and nothing else.

The democracy proclaimed so loudly in the poet's earliest play was revolutionary, and expressed nothing higher or more positive than his own dislike of school-discipline. The severity of the discipline in the school where he was trained has been exaggerated. Schiller, during his last two years at school, was earnestly engaged in writing his first play; and he fully believed that it would make a great sensation in the world. Hence his prolonged stay there—especially after 1779—was for him a time of painful imprisonment. The play—completed in 1780—however

crude and violent, tells something true of the time when it was written and gained such wide-spread popularity. In the course of the five years, 1777-82, a revolution took place in the poet's mind. He had been trained as a Christian by his parents. His mother was especially esteemed as a pious and well-instructed woman. When he was about seventeen years old (1776) he could still remember with reverence his early belief. Of this we are assured by a fragment of autobiography written about that time. He here describes himself as one "called to live in days of doubt and anxiety," and placed so that care is required on his part in order to avoid "unbelief on one side, and superstition on the other." He then proceeds as follows:—

"The bell calling all believers to church is now tolling, and the people are going to unite their voices in adoration. I will obey the summons, and will go with them, that my faith may be confirmed by thoughts of God and eternity. May my heart to-day be opened to receive impressions of truth; and may they be so confirmed in me that I may be prepared to make them known to others."—[He once had thoughts of choosing theology as his profession.] At the close of the fragment, he prays that his mind may be guarded against the influence of unbelieving men whom he calls "scorners."

In the course of another year, the poet—still at school—was engaged in writing some scenes in "the Robbers;" and not long after the time when the play first appeared, he wrote the letter in which he describes his early piety as something of which he has been deprived. Thus—writing in 1783—he addresses a supposed friend, to whom he applies the pseudonym "Raphael:"—

"It was a happy time when I was led blindfold. You have taught me to think; and the result is, that now I find myself disposed to lament the fact that I was ever born. You have robbed me of the faith that once gave me peace, and have taught me to despise that which I once adored. Many things to me seemed venerable, before the time when

they were 'unmasked' by your dismal wisdom. With pleasure I could once see men like brethren going to church, and could hear their voices blending in thanksgiving. Surely, I said, the faith that so unites the souls of good men, that develops such power, and bestows so much consolation—must be divine. But all that has passed away; your cold reason has extinguished my fervour. I have now accepted as law your proclamation:—'Nothing is sacred except truth. Henceforth believe in nothing save your own reason.' This teaching has been accepted as the law by which I must henceforth be guided. Now for all my remaining faith—in God, virtue, and immortality—I have no basis save what is found in my own reason; it will therefore be an evil day for me when I find my own reason capable of self-contradiction. There will remain then for me no basis of faith or firm persuasion."

The modesty and self-distrust implied in this letter soon passed away, and the poet—naturally a proud man—learned to look down with contempt on everything that in his boyhood had been believed. He thus acquired the true cosmopolitan and philosophical tone fashionable at the time; but for the most part he avoided the levity and self-complacency then prevalent. Intellectual dwarfs, whose sole work was destruction, were then as proud as Titans might be, if engaged in the construction of a new world; and petty despots, who could hardly listen to a word of calm reasoning, were incessantly prating of "freedom"—simply because they had nothing else to say. Schiller must not be classed with these common-place men of his period; yet it must be confessed that he preached too often on his favourite text—"cosmopolitan freedom"—in a style of which the following is an example:—

"I write now as a citizen of the world; as one who is subject to no prince—no king. To care for mankind—the people—is my sole study; in the public I recognize my true sovereign, and my true bosom friend. To this tribunal, and to no other, I am responsible. There is something

magnificent in the thought, that I am subject now to no restrictions, save those imposed by public opinion. To no Cæsar do I appeal; but to the universal soul of mankind. A citizen of the universe—in every man I see a member of one family—my own. Whatever may be his outward show of rank, office or position, I look through all these articles of dress and decoration, and see only my fellow-citizen.”

This was the style of eloquence that won for Schiller the honour of recognition by the National Convention. They claimed him as their brother, and, as we have seen, bestowed on him the title—“Mr. Gillès, citoyen français.” Eloquent declamations on liberty abound in the poet’s fourth play—“Don Carlos”—which was written at various times during the years 1784-7. These years were however a time of self-culture; and the good result is seen in the more thoughtful tone of several passages in this play.

Though it is mostly didactic, and—if viewed as a work of art—is a failure, it shows the earnestness of the writer’s endeavour to convert the theatre into a school of moral culture. He believed that it was possible to make the stage a great moral power in society. In an eloquent lecture, delivered in 1784, he contends that a superior drama may indirectly assist the laws of a nation in the support of morality. He argues that, even where the moral condition of a people is low, they may be led by a tragedy to feel a wholesome dread of crime; for example, when the poet brings on the stage the wife of Macbeth, muttering:—“All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand!”

“Such theatrical impressions”—he says—“cannot be esteemed good substitutes for moral teaching; but they are strong and durable upon the minds of the common people, and must have some value. Could any lecture on ingratitude produce the effect of Lear’s exclamation:—‘I gave you all’? . . . There are many minor virtues and vices which religion and law cannot notice; yet they are worthy of observation, and without personality or malice, these may be placed before us in legitimate comedy. In this

mirror we may see the defects and inconsistencies in our own characters, and, without having to submit to personal reproof, we may be secretly thankful to the comic dramatist for giving us wholesome hints, while he raises a laugh at the expense of an imaginary character. If against these observations it is argued that practical life contradicts them ; that spectators can witness representations of the best moral dramas, and feel no wholesome influence—still, admitting the force of the objection, I would say that the drama must not be condemned for having failed, as other institutions have failed, to produce a complete reformation in society." Thus Schiller reasoned—his conclusions all depending on the supposition that a legitimate and moral drama can be maintained.

Almost all that can be said for and against the moral power of the stage may be found, when this lecture is compared with an essay on the same subject written by Ignaz Wessenberg. "The drama," says this author, "however noble its character, must not give its lessons in a didactic style, but must place before us, in fair contrasts, the lights and the shadows of human nature ; must make us acquainted with the wise, the virtuous, and also with the foolish and the unworthy. And characters must be naturally drawn. The goodness which accompanies evil must claim our notice. The moral or general purport of a drama cannot appear in every part ; but must result from a fair view of the whole. Can we hope, even if a drama is in itself good, that all the spectators will take a fair view of the whole ? If a rogue is introduced on the stage, he must be made interesting ; his good humour, his cleverness, and his temporary success must be fairly shown, so as to awaken sympathy and interest in his fortunes. All this will not lead a discriminating mind into error ; but young and untrained minds will admire the hero, and forget that he is a rogue. There is no way of avoiding this result, so far as I can see. If the drama is made a vehicle of direct moral instruction, its true character, as a work of art, is destroyed."

The poet's object in writing "Don Carlos" was a reformation of society ; but the practical result was a reformation of himself. He was now no longer a wild revolutionist, but a moderate reformer, whose chief aim was to show that moral culture must open the only way that can lead to the attainment of liberty. There is no fact in his life more worthy of respect than this, that while such plays as "the Robbers" were still popular he renounced all such popularity as his earlier writings had won, and devoted himself to study, in order that he might be better qualified for teaching others. He still however talked too much of the everlasting contrast existing between "the real and the ideal;" and too lightly esteemed the value of the lessons taught by history.

In 1789 he was appointed Professor of History at Jena. His own words are enough to show how little importance he then ascribed to the study :—"It is now too late," he wrote, "or I would decline this appointment. What golden years of freedom must be sacrificed, while I am poring over old books and manuscripts! . . . I could laugh at myself for assuming this position; for many a student at Jena knows more of history than I do. . . . Perhaps, however, there will be found some listeners and readers who may like to follow such a guide as myself. . . . Already I have read with enthusiasm the story of that Revolt of the Netherlands, and I find there represented my own idea of freedom. There you see how a brave struggle was maintained for the recovery of liberty—the first essential characteristic of humanity. The power developed in that contest is not yet extinct. . . . It will be my endeavour to spread among the students something like my own enthusiasm. History must serve as the canvass on which my own idea will be depicted."

Of the patience, the quiet attention, and the teachable disposition demanded by the study of facts, the Professor of History says little or nothing ; and indeed it was but little that he knew. He was more seriously engaged soon after-

wards (in 1791) in the study of Kant's philosophy; and thus he was led to establish for himself the æsthetic-ethic principles afterwards developed in his own philosophical and critical writings, and in his correspondence with Goethe.

Freedom as understood by Schiller, when his mind was matured, was a noble idea—at once ethical, national and practical. This idea was more highly refined when he devoted his attention to the study of æsthetics. "The love of beauty," he said, "must be associated with pure morality, and the result of both is the attainment of a true personal freedom." The aim of a true ethical and æsthetic education is to convert the obedience due to stern law into a free expression of love. As the ideas of goodness and beauty are united, though distinct, there must be a natural connection between ethical and artistic training; though unhappily they are too often separated in fact, through the frailties of individuals. The art is too often made more estimable than the artist.

Art should aid morality; and both united should lead to personal liberty. This conclusion implied in his lecture on the drama—already noticed—was regarded by Schiller as something like a substitute for religion. So easily was its truth made evident to his own mind, that he imagined it might be spread, and be made available as a common basis of education. Hardly any fact can show more clearly how far sober, historical, and practical truth had been neglected, when Schiller could imagine that his poetical ethics might serve instead of a religion. Liberty, as he now defined it, is a refined sentiment, that can exist only in a man of high culture. It is but a dream to imagine that such a sentiment can ever be so appreciated by the majority as to take the place of authority, political and religious. Civilization must already be well founded before the time can arrive when artistic culture may serve as an auxiliary tendency, leading on to a higher stage of refinement. At the same time, it should be added, that the poet's idea of æsthetic-ethic culture is not one to be treated with contempt; and is not

to be confounded with any trivial notions of "art for the sake of art." Schiller venerates the ideal and invisible—the aspiration and true meaning in art. He regards the poet's vocation as one having a certain sanctity of character; as one justly demanding persevering study, and even the devotion of a life. He sometimes goes too far in this direction—at least on certain occasions, when he refers almost egotistically to the advantages of his own position (after 1793). Though he has married happily and is a father, he is thankful chiefly because he finds his domestic circumstances—especially the quiet cheerfulness of his wife—conducive to the success of his poetical studies. He lives now in a quiet little world of his own; and forgets the great world as well as he can. Thus he finds time to elaborate his theory of æsthetic-ethic education, of which some few more traits may be noticed; for next to poetry itself this was the chief study of his later years.

"Kant in his ethical teaching," says Schiller, "has made the law of duty repulsive, on account of its extreme severity" (p. 154). Law for the sake of law is something even worse than "art for the sake of art." "Sense and reason; conscience and sentiment; duty and inclination—these antithetical words denote discords that should be harmonized; and they are so harmonized in the mind of a true Christian, when he finds his delight in the fulfilment of the law. Hence Christianity must be called the only æsthetic religion." The harmony of will and morals, here defined by the poet, is otherwise called liberty; and to a sense of this liberty we may be led, he says, by the study of art. For art has its laws and its difficulties in rendering obedience; and when these are overcome, the result is a sense of liberty and delight.

As contrasted with this pleasant theory, the hard, abstract "law itself" prescribed by Kant seems intolerably severe, especially when it is made to appear, that obedience can hardly be called moral, if it be associated with any pleasurable emotion. At this point the poet's sense of

humour is awakened, and he levels against Kant's paradoxical law the following excellent epigram :—

“ Fain would I help the friend I hold so dear ;
But helping him would yield delight I fear ;
To keep my ethics pure, my friend must wait,
And meanwhile I must help the men I hate.”

Enough has been said to make a clear distinction between the poet's ideas and the trivial notions, or rather fashions, unfortunately called “æsthetic” in our day. Next must be noticed the poet's chief error. The culture he recommends may serve as a graceful attendant on goodness ; but it is falsely described as supplying an education that may take the place of religion. In the first place it should be observed, that religion is required by “all men,” and as the only sure basis of their practical morality. If proof be demanded here, we have only to dismiss all abstract or generalizing terms—such as virtue and vice—and speak of realities in terms as plain as possible. Selfishness, greed, envy, and hate—these are some of the chief motives by which men are led into evil. These names denote, not doctrines or opinions, but forces ; living energies that more or less are felt everywhere in society. Obviously the power by which they are controlled must be a living power, and must have authority. “The world,” says Kant, “must be controlled by means of a collective moral will.” So far as a maintenance of external morality is concerned, the civil government and its laws may represent the moral force required. But further inquiry will lead back to the truth already established (pp. 171-3) ; and will show, that as civil government is founded on morality, so morality is founded on religion. When we estimate the value of culture, artistic or scientific—viewed in its social relations—we are speaking of certain useful parts of a building or of its decorations ; but when we have to estimate the value of religion we are speaking of a power like that of gravitation itself—a power pervading the whole superstructure, and giving firmness to the foundation.

The notion of finding something like a substitute for religion in a doctrine of æsthetic-ethics was a delusion. The poet himself, in his later years, knew more of ordinary men and their motives. The Utopian dreams of his youth, and the later results of his philosophical studies, were both disturbed by the issue of the French revolution. He indeed always remained faithful to the idea of freedom ; but it was no longer the cosmopolitan and revolutionary idea of his youth. On the contrary, it was now an idea associated with national honour, social virtue, and patriotic devotion—the characteristics that made so attractive two of his later dramas : the “Maid of Orleans” and “William Tell.”

“Schiller is the poet of liberty.” This saying has been so often repeated and made so popular, that now it seems hopeless to write a word tending to qualify the sense in which the word “liberty” is mostly accepted, here as elsewhere. Yet it may be submitted, that the poet had a first idea of liberty, and a second. He gained renown by his first sensational play—where all who have money are “tyrants,” and those who would rob are true “friends of liberty”—but he lived long enough to be ashamed of that play. He wrote (in 1785) a rhapsodical and democratic “Hymn to Joy ;” but in later years he described that hymn as “a bad poem.” In his youth he aided the men of his day, who could do nothing but destroy ; men whose motto might have been *Iago’s*,—with a difference :—We “are nothing if not” destructive. Afterwards he endeavoured to build up something that might serve instead of a religious faith ; and he succeeded so far that—in his own mind, his home, and throughout the circle of his influence—he made the real subordinate to the ideal. He was, both in politics and in poetry, a self-educated man, whose success won the admiration of such friends as Goethe, Körner, and Wilhelm von Humboldt. The last-named was a refined critic, and one especially well qualified to estimate rightly the character of the poet, to whom (in 1803) he addressed such words as the following :—“The ideal is your own world—your home ; and

thence descend rays of light and warmth, to cheer this lower sphere in which we dwell."

More than other men, authors have to endure chastisement for the sins of their youth; it was so in Schiller's case. His earliest democratic notions were made thoroughly popular among certain classes. So far as his influence was spread among ignorant people, he was known as a man of the revolution; one whose principles were not unlike those proclaimed in such phrases as the following:—

"Liberté et égalité pour le gouvernement de la république; indivisibilité pour sa forme; salut public pour sa défense et sa conservation; vertu pour son principe; Être suprême pour son culte: quant aux citoyens, fraternité dans leurs relations mutuelles; probité pour leur conduite; bon sens pour leur esprit."*

These expressions of "good sense" are hardly more empty than some of the speeches ascribed to "Posa" in "Don Carlos"—a play that nevertheless reflects much honour on the writer. All the best sentiments ascribed to that fictitious character belonged in reality to the author; though they were still abstract—too little defined and moderated. These vague expressions of sentiments too refined to be popular led to the error of the violent men who hailed the poet as a brother. Their motto was liberty, and he had made it his watchword. Yet the difference existing between their intention and his own was so great that it can hardly be exaggerated. It may be illustrated, perhaps, by an anecdote of the time:—

On the 10th of August, 1792, while the sections were attacking the Tuileries, there might be observed a man of calm and refined expression—about fifty years old—walking quietly about in several of the streets of Paris, apparently knowing nothing of the terrible outrages committed on that day. It might indeed be guessed either that he was a man destitute of both personal fear and human sympathy, or that

* Mignet, "Hist. de la Revolution française;" chap. ix.

he was, in some strange way, eccentric. In neither case would the guess be true. He was so far "a friend of the revolution" that he described it as a preparatory movement, leading toward a true reformation; but he detested the cruelty of the men who had then made themselves the masters of France. He was an apostle of freedom; but the freedom to which his studies were devoted was an idea of which the revolutionary men of his day knew nothing. This was the mystic writer Saint-Martin—he called himself "*le Philosophe inconnu*"—a man whose natural disposition was pacific and amiable; though, in his own way, he was a revolutionary theorist. He could "trace"—he said—"in all the disorder of the times, the visible order of Divine Providence." The revolution was—as he believed—a severe punishment justly inflicted on men for their long course of impiety in past ages; and it was inevitable that the innocent must suffer with the guilty. This quiet mystic entertained also a belief even more dreadful—a belief that all the effusion of blood during the reign of terror was salutary, and would purify the earth from the stains left by many crimes. Defended only by his own faith, he thus lived fearlessly in Paris, even during the reign of Robespierre; and could look without dismay on the movement then taking place, though he had no sympathy with its leaders. Saint-Martin belonged to a certain school—one of the "secret societies," or "lodges," so numerous in his time. The founder of the school was a Jew named Martinez Pasqualis, who died in 1779. Enough has been told to indicate the fact, that extreme contrasts of character were found among the men classed together as "friends of liberty," in Schiller's time. In all respects, confusion was the order of the day; and one of its results was the fact that (in 1792) the poet was accepted as a worthy "citizen of France" by the Jacobins, whose reign of terror he describes in such lines as the following:—

"‘Freedom,’ says reason; ‘freedom,’ passion cries,
And snaps at once all chains—all social ties;

Asunder laws and sacred morals fly ;
 The pole-star shines no longer in the sky ;
 The world's a raging sea, without a shore ;
 Love, truth, and loyalty, are known no more.
 There's left no rest, no faith, in human hearts,
 And from man's conscience God himself departs."

This is indeed vigorous declamation ; and at the same time is thoughtful and sincere. In proportion as the poet's own idea of freedom was patriotic, reasonable, and humane, just so deep or intense was the horror excited in his mind by the second stage of the revolution. His indignation is again expressed—and in terms still more energetic—in the "Song of the Bell," written in 1799. From the passage describing the reign of terror a few lines may here be given in the form of our translation :—

" ' Freedom !—Equality ! ' they cry ;
 ' To arms ! ' the sections all reply.
 Now banded murderers ' brethren ' meet
 In every palace, hall, and street ;
 And those who once were ' women ' called—
 Now fell hyænas—unappalled,
 Make sport of death itself, and fain
 Would slay once more the victims slain.

" There's nought left now of ancient awe,
 Of order based in oldest time ;
 Extinct are reason, right, and law,
 And ' freedom ' all belongs to crime.

" Fell is the lion in his ire—
 The tiger, with his eyes of fire ;
 But worse the foes that here we see
 Disguised in likeness of mankind ;
 The ' friends of liberty '—all blind—
 All frenzied—shouting : ' We are free ! ' "

When the fact is noticed that Schiller, at various times, said much in favour of freedom, it may be well to notice also his later definitions of freedom. His early enthusiasm was depressed by the issue of events in France. The basis of his belief in man's capacity of enjoying true liberty

was not changed ; he could still write sincerely such words as these :—

“ First, man must be free ; 'tis his nature's decree ;
 Ay, though he in fetters was born.
 'Tis true ; though the rabble who shout, ‘ We are free !’
 May fairly awaken your scorn.
 Spread round you true freedom, as far as you can ;
 Take off the slave's fetters, and make him a man.”

The lines here quoted belong to the poem entitled “The Words of Faith,” written in 1797. Two years later, he wrote, as a counterpart, the five stanzas entitled “The Words of Delusion,” of which the tone is subdued—not to say melancholy. Here we find such sentiments as the following :—

“ A man can know little of life's noble aim,
 So long as he follows the shadow I name—

 So long as he waits for ‘ a golden age,’
 When the good and the true will have peace—
 For good men have ever a warfare to wage,
 A warfare that here will not cease ;
 So far as they fail to contend for the right,
 So far will the foeman prevail in the fight.

 “ A man can know little of life's noble aim,
 So long as he follows the shadow I name—

 So long as he hopes ‘ worldly fortune,’ at last,
 Will shine on the good and the true—
 Her smiles on the worthless have ever been cast ;
 Good men, she has nothing for you !
 For you there's a home that shall never decay ;
 But here you are pilgrims—and rough is the way.”

Further examples of moderation in the poet's later doctrine of liberty may be seen in our quotations selected from his later correspondence and other writings in prose. These are on one account especially noticeable ; they afford examples of a change of views taking place in the mind of a man eminently sincere, ideal, pure in intention, and still

more remarkable for one trait not often noticed—he was singularly unconscious respecting the nature of certain tendencies that appear in his later writings. Consequently if here we observe any signs of his return toward a reverential view of Christianity, we may rest assured that they are—in the highest possible sense of the word—sincere. He did not see the end of the way in which he was going.

His later political views were also sincere. The closing acts of the revolution had now compelled him to know more of human nature than he had ever learned in the course of his earlier historical studies. These in fact had always been conducted in a superficial and one-sided way; and thus could never lead to the knowledge of truth. He knew but little of the dread realities always lying hid behind the curtain of civilization. Of those terrors he knows comparatively little even now (at the close of 1792) when he can gravely think it probable that Danton and his associates will pay some respectful attention to the petition of "citizen Gillès" that the life of Louis XVI may be spared. "This is a time when a man must speak"—says the poet—"for now, at this crisis in France, there may be many who will listen to my voice" [!]. The petition would be written and sent; but he is hindered by his want of facility in writing French. He does not despair; but now his political hopes are expressed in terms as moderate as these:—"We must strive to do right; though we cannot do all that is right. We must seek first the practicable; not the perfect. Our notions must not be too wide; we must care for the nation to which we belong. Here lies our strength; here our endeavours will be well-rooted. It is no more our duty to care for the whole of the human race, than it is our duty to exercise control over the wind and the rain."

Schiller was now in some measure able to correct a gross error of his former years. He had then spoken lightly of the duties belonging to a great statesman. The poet and the thinker, he had said, produce the thoughts and impulses by which society is ultimately governed; but the statesman

only makes use of their ideas at the time when they can be made practical. There is some inkling of truth in the notion; but its tendency—to degrade the noble idea of statesmanship—is false and injurious to a degree. The statesman's work may indeed be called secondary in one respect, since other men—especially religious teachers—have already made the preparation without which his success would be impossible; but none the less for that, the honour due to his own work remains—he has *done* that which before was merely designed; he has transmuted into facts ideas once described as dreams. In work like this it is not the mere poet, however ideal, nor the mere thinker, however profound; but it is the great practical man whose character is displayed. He is, in his own way, an eclectic and yet a creative man. Out of all the confusion of dreams he can select some good ideas. He will not rest content with thoughts that can do nothing. He lives surrounded by ideas that cannot be realized, and schemes that can be made practicable only after the lapse of centuries. Among them he finds better thoughts; and from these he selects those most practicable now. He selects, combines, and so forms plans that can be carried out in practice. On the measures so prepared he stamps at last the firm impress of abiding institutions. This is his work, and it is great; just as the poet's work is great in its way.

That a generous man, like Schiller, could at any time estimate slightly the duties of a great statesman, is a fact that can be explained only by means of reference to another—he knew comparatively but little of history and politics. Like too many other precocious writers on serious questions, he lived long enough to deplore in vain the triumph of errors that had been spread abroad partly by means of his own declamatory fervour. The results are thus described in his later writings:—

“Respect for old established tenets is destroyed. Despotism has been unmasked. Man has been awakened, is made conscious of his native independence; and with all the

emphasis of large majorities, he now demands full restoration of his imperishable rights. The foundations have been moved, and the whole superstructure of society is shaken. . . . The results are disappointing. Enlightened reason—the boast of the educated classes—has led to no higher morality; but rather has supplied arguments in support of egotism, while refinement—so-called—has served mostly to increase the number of our natural wants. . . . What is now most urgently required, is a reformation that shall be at once moral and æsthetic. Let frivolity be first expelled from our amusements [*i.e.* the theatre, art and literature], then it may be expelled from our more serious occupations; and at last it may be driven out of our hearts.” [The order if reversed would surely be more logical.] . . . “Let the people, in the midst of their recreations, find themselves surrounded with forms of beauty; and thus nature herself will be educated under the influence of art.”*

These later sentences will serve to confirm the truth of our conclusion—that the poet sometimes described æsthetic culture as a substitute for religion.

It has been shown that the poet's early rationalism and extreme democracy were tempered and moderated by his subsequent opinions; but it is not implied that the latter were able to destroy the effects of the former tendencies. The crude idea of liberty was one that could be seized by everybody. The refined idea of a culture, leading first to personal, and then to social and political freedom—this unfortunately is not an idea that can be grasped or well understood by the multitude. The popular Schiller—as “the poet of liberty”—will always count on his side more votes than those given to the philosophical poet. The distinction here noticed is one suggested by the general indirect tendencies of his writings, when viewed in contrast with their special traits. The former are patent to every

* “Briefe über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen;” 1795.

reader; the latter are observed only by careful students. When the saying is once more repeated, that for Schiller independent culture takes the place of religion, the truth of the conclusion is obvious, though it may require some qualification. On the other hand, when it is suggested that his later writings contain evidences of a latent reverence, of which Christianity is the object, the remark may seem to require some evidence to show its truth.

The new classic literature of Germany—especially the poetry of Goethe and Schiller—arose in the time when rationalism was commonly accepted as almost equivalent to a demonstration. It was understood that literary culture should be independent, and—to use the word employed by Goethe in describing his own position in 1781—"non-Christian;" and on the whole this general definition was not forgotten. Consequently—as we have seen already—it is not easy to find in all the writings of Goethe any direct and concise answer to the question, "How much did he believe of the Christian Religion?" The difficulty of finding a direct answer will not be lessened when we turn to notice, in this respect, the prose-writings and the poems of Schiller—including his dramas.—One fact is clear—that, like his friend Goethe, he sometimes expresses reverential sentiments that may be called involuntary; and when such expressions occur in his poetry, the evidence they afford will not seem inconsiderable, if we remember that he sincerely believed in the moral power of poetry. It was for him an earnest occupation to write ballads and dramas; because he believed that this was his best way of communicating to others the truth that for himself was the highest possible. He is sincere when—in the story of "Ibycus"—he makes dramatic art an agent of Divine Justice; and he is also sincere when he shows us the beauty of Christian humility in the adventure of a knight belonging to the Order of St. John. As regards the reverence often expressed in his later poems, it is probable that, for the most part, he was as unconscious of its source as of its tendency.

The general theology of Schiller's poetry may be called theistic. His three "Words of Faith"—"freedom," "virtue," "God"—as defined in the poem so entitled, may be accepted as his substitute for a creed, so far as it is anywhere formally pronounced. But it should not be forgotten that in some of the finest passages of his poetry he introduces sentiments that are distinctly Christian. For one example may be noticed the ballad entitled the "Fight with the Dragon." Here self-conquest is honoured as the greatest heroism; and the truth is well illustrated. The slaying of the serpent pride, whose lair is in the heart, is a deed nobler than slaying the great dragon of Rhodes. It should be premised, that in the Order of the Knights of St. John it was a rule, that no knight should undertake any adventure without receiving permission from the Grand Master. Disregarding this rule, one named Dieu-donné sallied forth to attack a huge dragon which had spread devastation over a large district near Rhodes. He had taken every precaution to insure success in his bold adventure. To train his charger and his hounds for the combat, he employed an artist to make an image of the monster, and, when the dogs were accustomed to attack the hideous effigy, they were led out against the real dragon. The knight returned victorious, dragging behind him the slain enemy, and accompanied by crowds of people loudly hailing their deliverer. Meanwhile, the Knights of the Order are assembled in conclave in their hall. The hero appears before them, and receives from the Grand Master a stern reprimand for his disobedience. He must divest himself of his badge and surrender all claims to the honour of Christian knighthood. The crowd who have pressed into the hall, expecting to see some great reward bestowed on their hero, stand in mute amazement when this heavy censure falls upon him, and some of his brethren come forward to plead for grace; but the penitent meekly submits, takes off his badge, and, before he turns away, kisses the hand of the Grand Master.

“‘Here! to my heart!’ the Master cries;
‘Come back!—by deeds of valour done,
You only risked the Christian’s prize
Which now your lowliness hath won.’”

Nothing can be more Christian than the ruling idea of this poem; for self-humiliation is the mystery and the glory of our faith. Schiller—in profession a rationalist—did not invent the stories on which his ballads are founded. He selected them from various sources, and in several instances chose stories of which the principal theme is Christian humility, as in “The Walk to the Forge,” and the “Count of Hapsburg.” Thus he accepted in poetry ideas which had been rejected by his understanding. Why?—Two distinct motives have been assigned by critics. He was mostly concerned—it is said—to find a subject well suited for poetic illustration; and cared little for any principles or doctrines that might seem to be implied in the story. To this it is replied, that vice and crime also supply subjects that imaginative power can make too attractive. Even in our own day—when everything good must be demonstrated before it can be believed—no arguments are demanded to support this proposition. It is obvious enough, that a poet, or a novelist, may now win fame—and something for which men care more than for fame—by making himself a pander to vice. Schiller cared for fame; and he gained it at last—not so much however by his noble ballads, as by the assertion of national liberty contained in his most popular dramas. A better motive than love of fame must account for his choice of Christian themes. The heart is often wiser than the head; the truth grasped by feeling is something more than the hard definitions classified by the understanding. The genius dictating the highest and purest poetry is wiser than the poet himself, when he writes down and polishes his verses. Unconscious, non-systematic thought may be leading a man on toward spiritual and divine light, while his accepted dogmas of

“freethinking” may be hanging all the while upon him as fetters upon a prisoner.

These distinctions will be found true, when we have regard only to the thoughts and feelings of commonplace men; but they are especially true when applied to the character of a man like Schiller. In his later years he did not understand the religious tendency of his own sentiments. They are of course most freely expressed in his poetry; yet there may be found in his later prose writings passages to support our opinion—that near the close of his life he was led to think with reverence of religion. A passage in the poet’s later correspondence, to which we have already briefly referred (p. 325), may here be more distinctly noticed. It is found in a letter addressed to his friend Zelter, in 1804:—

“In the dark time of superstition, Berlin first kindled the torch of rational, religious liberty. That was then a necessity, and the act was one worthy of renown. Now, in this age of unbelief, there is another kind of renown that might be won, and without any forfeiture of the honour already gained. Let Berlin now add warmth to the light [of rationalism] and thus ennoble the Protestantism of which this city is destined some day to be the capital. The spirit of the present age demands this. In France we see how Catholicism is now rising again. It is surely desirable then, that in Protestantism there should be revived some feeling of religion, and that philosophy itself should follow in the same direction.”

CHAPTER XIV.

THE ROMANTIC SCHOOL, ETC.

THE title of this chapter may seem out of place. It may however be accepted—so far as we shall make use of it—as an almost arbitrary collective name—one in this case applied to a number of writers in the several departments of poetry, history, criticism, and general literature, who made themselves more or less prominent in the course of the time 1805-30, and who were all united by one common tendency. Here those whose writings appeared in the first decennium of the present century are chiefly noticed. Among them were numbered several men to whose theories and sentiments such descriptive terms as “dreamy,” “mystical,” and “visionary” have been applied. At the same time it is allowed that one of the leading traits of their school was a tendency toward reverence—a wish to restore, either in the indirect form of poetry, or in some way more direct, a general recognition and feeling of religious truth. Among these men the restoration of which Schiller had spoken was actually taking place at that time—shortly before his decease—when he described it only as desirable.*

* But why should these men be classed together as belonging to a school called “romantic?”—For English readers the name is misleading. Our usage does not correspond with German uses of some words derived from the stem “Roma.” With us the adjective “Roman” preserves the original sense. German writers apply their term “romanische” to the nations speaking languages based on Latin; and since the literatures of these nations were developed in the course of the Middle Ages, the term “romantisch” is made

When a large vessel has been wrecked, and the crew—having escaped in small boats—have made themselves dependent on the mercy of the winds and the waves, it is not always easy to discover how many have perished, or on what shores others have landed. So after the wreck of Christian belief that took place almost suddenly in North Germany (1770-1800) many no doubt whose names are unknown were utterly lost as regards the confession to which they had formerly belonged; others were scattered here and there among the Pietists, including those called Moravians; and there were doubtless left among those who belonged formally to no confession, many who as private individuals still cherished pious feelings. This consideration makes less surprising the apparently sudden revival of religious sentiment that took place about the beginning of the present century. Religion was not everywhere as much forgotten as it was at Weimar. As a coincidence it may be noticed that this, after the death of Schiller (1805) was no longer the metropolis of literature. The awakening religious sentiment of the time was soon afterwards made more earnest by the circumstances which led to the war of

equivalent in meaning to mediæval. Moreover, the same word placed in opposition to "classic" or "antique" serves to denote one of the main distinctions observed in æsthetic criticism. The art of the ancient Greeks is here called "classic" or "antique," and that of mediæval times is called "romantische" (romantic). In the literature of the Middle Ages are found—in France, and Spain, as well as in Germany—examples of such stories as in English are called "romantic;" consequently the term "romantisch" is sometimes employed in the sense of our corresponding word "romantic." Enough of the word—which would not be employed here at all, were it not too well established by the usage of many writers on literary history. Its clearest meaning may be shown in the following example of its most frequent use in German:—"These writers—Bouterwek, the brothers Schlegel, and their followers—have spread widely the study of romantic [= 'romantische'] literature—especially the study of Provençal, Italian and Spanish poetry; and with this study has been associated admiration of the social, political and religious institutions of mediæval times."

liberation. In literature, religion and philosophy, the moral influence of Fichte's later teaching now made itself felt (pp. 186-8). If the more serious tone of literature and philosophy at this time could be ascribed especially to an individual, that man would be Fichte.

These considerations might here lead us too far ; for the aim of this chapter is to show briefly how the characteristics of the age were reflected in general literature ; especially in poetry and imaginative prose. Of course, no elaborate criticism will here be attempted. It is the common tendency of certain writers that is chiefly to be noticed. Among them it will be convenient to name two or three who, strictly speaking, do not belong to the school. For example, if Jean Paul's name is out of place here, it would be still more out of place anywhere else. If some slight allusion be made to the writings of Heine, it will serve by way of contrast to mark some traits in the poetry of the Romantic School. On the whole, the poetical writers of this school cannot be called great. The highest merit to be ascribed to the brothers Schlegel is claimed by their extensive services in widening the domain of general literature.

The elder brother, AUGUST WILHELM VON SCHLEGEL (1767-1846), first acquired fame by some specimens of a translation of Dante ; and, soon afterwards, commenced a translation of Shakespeare. At Jena he was united with his brother in the production of a critical journal, "The Athenæum" (1798), and in writing a series of "Characteristics and Critiques" (1801). He issued a translation of "Calderon's Dramas" in 1803, and "Garlands of Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese Poetry" in 1804. His lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature were given in Vienna in 1808. Subsequently he devoted his studies with enthusiasm to Oriental, and especially Sanskrit literature. As regards matters of belief, it is chiefly to be noticed, that he wrote with satirical ability against some of the rationalists who meddled with questions of literature and criticism. It has

been said that he went over to the Roman Catholic Church ; but this is an error, arising out of his literary association with his brother.

FRIEDRICH VON SCHLEGEL, the younger brother (1772-1829), gained a reputation by a "History of the Poetry of the Greeks and the Romans," published in 1798. In 1803 he went over to the Church of Rome, and, subsequently, his lectures and writings were intended to advocate, more or less directly, the faith which he had embraced. His views in favour of Roman Catholicism are partly found in his treatise "On the Wisdom of the Hindoos," as well as in his "History of Ancient and Modern Literature." His lectures on the "Philosophy of History" were written with religious and political purposes. The best argument contained in these lectures is that which exposes the danger of negative reformation ; or, in other words, the inexpediency of destroying old institutions before new ideas are prepared to develop themselves in consistency with the order of society. In the "History of Ancient and Modern Literature" (1811-12), the author describes its development in connection with the social and religious institutions of various nations and periods. The history of the world of books is thus represented as no pedantic study, but as one intimately connected with the best interests of humanity. As regards the history of literature and general culture, this is an epoch-making book, and is remarkable for its breadth of outline. The religious tendencies of the school were not so well represented by the brothers Schlegel as by their young friend Hardenberg, who in his writings chose the pseudonym Novalis, by which he is generally known.

FRIEDRICH VON HARDENBERG was born in 1772. After residing for some time at Jena, he went through a course of study in the mining-school at Freiberg, and prepared himself for the duties of practical life. He was hardly thirty years old when he died. His mind, like his physical constitution, was sensitive and delicate ; and it may be said that his life in this world was mostly spent in meditation on

another world. He dreamed of a church that would unite all men as one family, and of a faith that would have for its symbols both art and practical life. He was not content with the internal vision, but, seeking for its realization on earth, he believed that he had found it in the Roman Catholic Church of the Middle Ages. He described that church as the only centre from which a religious life could diffuse its influence through society. To find peace for nations as well as for individuals, we must return, he said, to mediæval institutions. In his unfinished romance, "Heinrich von Ofterdingen," he endeavoured to treat the common events of this life as symbols of a higher life; and in his "Hymns to Night" he wrote of the vague longings or aspirations of the soul as higher and truer than all science and philosophy. His poetry belongs only in part to the school of which he was styled "the prophet." Several of his hymns may be noticed as true and melodious expressions of pious feeling. The following translation of three stanzas may serve as an example :—

" Let me have but Him—
Then while he is mine,
While my heart no other love,
Jesu, knows but thine,
Hence, away, all thoughts of worldly woe !
Love, and joy and peace are all I know.

" Let me have but Him—
Leaving all below,
Following where he leads me on,
With my Lord I go.
Let the world a smoother road display ;
Jesu, from thy path I ne'er will stray.

" Let me have but Him—
Then when death is near,
He'll be nearer who for me
Shed his life-blood dear.
All its precious, healing, soothing power
I shall know and feel, in life's last hour."

Critics have found in the poetical writings of Novalis a

confusion of Catholicism with mysticism and pantheism. It should be added, however, that the sentiments called pantheistic are mostly poetical, and do not indicate any trust in that system of philosophy. A variety more bewildering is seen when we turn to notice the writings of Tieck.

LUDWIG TIECK, born at Berlin in 1773, was the most prolific and versatile of the imaginative men belonging to the school. He possessed the talents required to make an eminent actor; and the genius he displayed in his "dramatic readings" was unrivalled in his day. These facts serve to indicate the chief characteristic of his poetical writings. So long as we read, caring for nothing but poetry—diversified by traits of playful, ironical humour—they afford imaginative amusement. But Tieck writes sometimes on questions of the deepest interest; and here he rather suggests than satisfies questions respecting his serious belief. Partly on account of some attacks made on both Rationalism and Lutheranism in his novel, "Sternbald's Wanderings," it has been supposed that he was a Catholic; but no direct evidence of his conversion has appeared. No censure is implied when his best imaginative works—"Genoveva," "Phantasus," and "Octavian"—are here left unnoticed; since our aim is to notice his writings merely in their relation to one tendency. In his fictions he introduces here and there religious subjects that should hardly be named in novels and romances; and thus he set an example too often imitated in later works of fiction. In one of his novels for instance, he gives an imaginative account of a "conversion" that may be called sensational. Here a few poetical sentences may be quoted:—

"Now"—says the individual described as a new convert—"I could understand the deep voice of lamentation in the forest, on the mountain, and in the murmuring stream. I could hear and understand it now as the voice of the Eternal uttering his sympathy with all his creatures. His voice seemed sounding from every wave of the river, and

whispering from every leaf and twig of the forest. All things around me seemed to rebuke me for my past cold, unbelieving, and indolent existence. I thought at once of the past and of the future. Every thought was a prayer, and my heart was melted down to one feeling of devotion. I plunged into the deepest recesses of the wood, and gave free vent to my tears."

This excitement subsides, and the new convert is described as wandering on until he reaches a desolate landscape, where no tree, not even a shrub, casts a shade all around. There is scarcely a patch of grass on the dry, white soil of limestone; as far as the eye can travel, solitary blocks or massive groups of limestone are seen, some splintered by frost, so as to resemble rudely forms of men, cattle, and houses. It is a confusing and wearisome prospect. There is graphic power in this description of scenery, which is made as it were sympathetic with the sense of desolation soon following religious excitement. The supposed convert now speaks thus of the change in his sentiments:—

"Here I rested awhile, and gazed all around me on the scene of desolation, and then upwards to the dark-blue sky. A strange alteration of thoughts and feelings came upon me here. I cannot in any words express how entirely, how suddenly, every sentiment of belief, every noble, inspiring thought, vanished—died away—and left me utterly disconsolate. I cannot tell you how nature, the whole creation, and man, its greatest problem—with all his marvellous powers and all his weakness and pitiable dependence on these external elements—were now changed for me; how hopeless and dreary, nay, how absurd and contemptible all things now appeared to me—to me who had so lately seen all things as arrayed in a new, celestial light!—I could not repress my scorn—I could not control myself; but gave vent to a cynical despairing laugh at the whole world, as I now saw it. There was no immortal soul; nothing but absurdity, objectless existence, and miserable delusion in all

that creeps, swims, or flies ; and, most of all, in this head of mine—"the crown of the visible creation, forsooth !"

The aim of this chapter is nothing more than to indicate the one general characteristic of the writers called "romantic." Several among them were Catholics — Brentano, Eichendorff, Görres, Werner, Adam Müller, and Ludwig Haller—some might be described as men for whom mediæval institutions were but a sort of poetical furniture ; and there were others whose religious views were almost as indefinite as those we may ascribe to Tieck ; yet in all of them is found something like a tendency toward a revival of religious thought and feeling ; and this is the more remarkable, as in some instances the writer seems hardly conscious of the idea by which his mind is controlled. "Religion has been slain"—says one of the most eccentric men of this time—"and now her ghost seems to haunt the minds of men."

If JEAN PAUL does not belong to the school of writers called romantic, his writings belong partly to their time, and express—here and there, at least—their religious and patriotic tendencies. He was at once a rationalist and a mystic ; though such a connection of opposites may seem impossible. In his boyhood he was pious ; but, like Schiller, he was a sceptic in his youth. In later life he wished that his son might be educated by Paulus, an eminent rationalist. The difference sometimes described as existing between "the heart and the head"—feelings and opinions—is more than usually observable in the writings of Jean Paul ; and he was not utterly unconscious of the fact. "Deep sorrows," he tells us, "outlive all consolations ; and religious sentiments outlive all refutations of our early belief." There can be given here no critical account of his stories, which have lost the popularity they once enjoyed. Of all their traits one of the most attractive is their genial youthfulness of sentiment ; and still more amiable is their sympathy with the poor and the afflicted. They contain valuable remarks on domestic, especially maternal, education ;

and here and there are found passages of earnest admonition, like the following :—

“ At midnight, when the old year was departing, there stood at his window an old man, looking forth with an aspect of despair on the calm never-fading heavens, and on the pure, white and quiet earth, where there seemed to exist then no creature so sleepless and so miserable as himself. Now near the grave, this old man had, as the results of his long career, nothing but errors, sins and disease—a shattered body, a desolated soul, a poisoned heart, and an age of remorse. The beautiful years of his youth were all changed into dismal goblins, shrinking away now to hide themselves from the dawn of another new year. . . . In his unutterable grief, he looked up towards the heavens ; but soon looked down again on the fields surrounding a neighbouring church. Misguiding lights gleamed forth out of the marsh, and faded away in the churchyard. ‘ There are my days of folly ! ’ he said. Then a shooting star fell from heaven, flickered—vanished. ‘ That is myself ! ’ said he, while the fangs of remorse were biting into his bleeding heart. . . . He covered his face with his hands, and tears streamed down his cheeks, while he sighed ;—‘ Oh, give me back my youth ! ’ . . . And his youth returned.—He was suddenly awakened—how glad to find, that his terror had been caused by a dream ; that he had still time left, and could still repent of the sins of his youth.”

Expressions of religious sentiment found in the romantic writers are often mingled with ideas that may be called mystical, or even fantastic. The pervading tone is more distinct and earnest, when we turn to notice the songs, and other appeals to the people, called forth by the impending war of liberation. It was a time made glorious by self-sacrifice. Youths that could hardly be called more than boys, and grey-haired men, old enough to claim exemption from military service, now came forth to devote their lives. Wives, sisters and mothers encouraged the men as they marched to battle, carried ammunition and provisions, and in some instances, armed themselves and fought bravely. For once in the history of the world, philosophy and practice, poetry and reality, were united in this contest. The universities were made schools of patriotism ; Fichte gave to his idealism a national and practical purport ; Schleiermacher, as the representative of theology, came to

the front, and the imaginative man of science, Steffens, served in the army and gained the distinction of the Iron Cross. Poetry numbered among its patriotic representatives Arndt and Schenkendorf, Körner and Rückert. The poet of national liberty, Schiller, though dead, was yet speaking. "Youths carried into the struggle the enthusiasm kindled by his poetry ; his songs were on their lips." Every regiment had its volunteers, and among these one of the most fervent was Körner, who fell in one of the earliest skirmishes (1813). Not only such bold and restless spirits as were led on by Körner, but also men of a quiet and pious character shared in the enthusiasm of the time. Schenkendorf, who wrote also soothing and Christian poetry, was the author of several patriotic songs, including that beginning with—

"Awaken !—from the dust
Arise, ye sleepers all !"

ERNST MORITZ ARNDT, who died (1860) at the age of ninety, must not be forgotten. His words were often too fierce, and, at the present time, we can hardly read them with approval. But no cold and unreal criticism must be applied to burning words kindled by an intolerable sense of oppression. He might have taken for his motto the words of Juvenal—"Be a good soldier !" Thus Arndt begins a song on the right use of iron in times of bondage :—

"The God who made the iron ore
Will have no man a slave ;
To arm the man's right hand for war
The sword and the spear He gave,
And He gives to us a daring heart,
And for burning words the breath
To tell the foemen that we fear
Dishonour more than death."

FRIEDRICH RÜCKERT, who died in 1866, nearly eighty years old, is hardly remembered now as one of the writers of war-songs in 1813-14 ; for when the war was ended he turned away from politics, and devoted the rest of his life to poetry and the study of oriental literature. The quietude

of his domestic life is reflected in his writings. He was a true poet, and one never weary of writing on his favourite themes—the transitions of a peaceful life. In his meditative work, “the Wisdom of the Brahman,” he is mostly didactic; and here and there humorous, as when he thus notices the despotic claims of modern science:—

“A time will come,” they say, “when poetry will be play
For babies, and the boys will throw vain rhymes away,
And give their whole attention to science deep and clear,
And all things will be manly, scientific and severe.
Humanity will then its flag of victory wave—
And, thank God! I shall then be sleeping in the grave.”

For his purity of sentiment Rückert deserves high commendation, and occasionally he can blend with an unpretending parable a true lesson of religious philosophy, as in the following example:—

“A father and his son are wandering far from home;
Late in the night along a lonely moor they roam.
On every rock and tree and o’er the dismal plain,
For guidance through the gloom, the boy looks forth in vain;
Meanwhile the old man looks upon the heavens alone.
‘How can our path on earth among the stars be shown?’—
‘Rocks, trees and lonely moor tell nothing of the way;’
From heaven the pole-star sheds a faint but steady ray,
And shows the safe road home—’Tis good to trust in One;
To find your path on earth, look up to heaven, my son.”

LUDWIG UHLAND (1487-1862) wrote in pure and simple language poetry that may be associated with the best productions of the writers called romantic. Like them he introduces the traits of mediæval scenery—such as castles looking down from crags upon rivers, valleys, and towns of quaint architecture. He can suggest a deep thought while he tells a simple story, and can leave half-uttered, yet indicated, a pathos “too deep for tears.” A few of his poems may be called dreamy; but their tone is often religious, while their truth is indirectly conveyed. In one ballad, for example, we are led into a weird enchanted forest; and here the warriors who have escaped from all

perils of open battle are overcome just when they see nothing to be feared. In another lone forest, a distant tolling of bells calls up thoughts of a faith long forgotten; and we are led on to a secluded sanctuary where religion, elsewhere unknown, has still a dwelling place. One is tempted to say much of Uhland; for in several of his poems we find the true reverential spirit that breathes through the following simple verses. Here the scenery is an open plain, where on Sunday a lonely shepherd is praying:—

“This is the Lord’s own day.
Out on the lonely plain I hear
A far-off chiming die away;
All’s silent—far and near.

“I kneel upon the green,
And, with a thrill of holy fear,
I feel that multitudes unseen
Are praying with me here;

And heaven—so pure and clear—
So solemn, near, and far away—
Seems opening all around me here.
This is the Lord’s own day.”

Next to Uhland may be named his friend, the humorous mystic and visionary JUSTINUS KERNER (1786-1862). His poetical merits hardly demand notice; but his name serves to introduce some notice of a tendency partly belonging to other writers of his time. He was as it were haunted by his belief, that “incursions from the ghostly world”—to use his own words—“take place in our real life.” The tone of his verses was often melancholy; yet his grief was but light when compared with that expressed in the poetry of his friend LENAÜ. This name of an Austrian poet—who was educated as a Catholic—suggests a question too serious to be discussed here; and it would not be mentioned even, if the case to which it immediately refers could fairly be called solitary. Lenau mostly ascribes to scepticism his

own mental sufferings, and the ultimate total eclipse of his mind. Thus he writes in one place :—

“ A fool, in early life I strayed away,
Far from my home—the paradise of faith—
I’ve lost my way ; and never can return.”

The folly that here, as in many places, he ascribes to himself was the study of philosophy so much in vogue among young students in his day. In his case, as in many others, metaphysics led to nothing save bewilderment and despair. This he often confesses ; for example in lines like these :—

“ Our reason, in the hour of need,
Will leave us in despair ;
There’s but one way the soul to lead
To God—and that is prayer.”

ADALBERT VON CHAMISSE (1781-1838) was a native of France, whose parents were driven from their native land by the revolution. He was, during his boyhood, a page in the service of the Queen of Prussia ; and afterwards became a lieutenant in the army. When the war of liberation began, he felt that he could fight neither against his native land, nor against the land that was now his home. Fortunately he was soon engaged to accompany an expedition in a voyage round the world. One of the best of his poems was suggested by a story heard during a cruise in the Pacific. On a lone and bare reef, known as *Salas y Gomez*, some remains of a wrecked vessel had been found. “ It was terrible,” says the poet, “ to think that here one solitary man had been left alive ; for the eggs of sea-fowl are rather plentiful ; and might too long serve to support his existence on this bare, sunburnt crag, where sea and sky alone are visible.” The poem founded on this supposition tells how a solitary old man left on the rock wrestles with his grief. He writes on slaty tablets brief memoranda of his hopes and his gradual despair—all the transitions of his feelings. A sail appears, like a white speck on the horizon ; it comes nearer—still nearer ; and hope springs up once more in the

breast of the cast-away. But soon the sail fades away from his strained vision. Ocean, sky, wailing sea-birds are once more all his world. Then follows his deepest despair. At last it is transmuted into submission. He looks up to the constellation of the Southern Cross, shining on the deep. That sign suggests resignation; and thus he concludes his confession:—

“The tempest that within me raved has pass’d;
 Here, where so long I’ve suffered, all alone,
 I will lie down in peace and breathe my last.
 Let not another sail come near this stone
 Until all sighs and tears have pass’d away!—
 Why should I long to go, a man unknown,
 To see my childhood’s home, and there to stray,
 Without a welcome or kind look, and find
 That all my dear old friends are ’neath the clay?—
 Lord! by thy grace, my soul, to thee resigned,
 Let me breathe forth in peace, and let me sleep
 Here, where thy Cross shines calmly o’er the deep.”

It is not easy to define strictly the time when the influence of the Romantic School passed away; but it will not be far wrong if the year 1830 be fixed as a limit. Political and social questions were then made prominent; and Heine, with other young writers—sometimes associated under the name of “Young Germany”—gained a considerable notoriety. Extreme liberal opinions were now asserted. Börne, an Israelite by birth, called loudly for a political revolution, and Heine went further in his notions of social revolution. The former wrote “Letters from Paris,” of which the import may be given in a few words:—“We must have a revolution, and it must take place immediately.” He was sincere and earnest; but patience, as he confessed, was not numbered among his virtues. In one of his declamatory passages, his fervour thus bursts forth in an odd form of prayer:—

“O Patience! Queen of the German People and of tortoises! Patroness of my poor, languishing native land! Germanize me, O Goddess! from the sole of my foot to the

crown of my head, and then stow me away in a museum of old curiosities and in a case filled with the most singular petrifications! I vow that, henceforth, I will be thy most faithful servant. I will regularly peruse 'The Dresden Evening News,' and all the theatrical criticisms. Yes, I will read Hegel until I understand what he means, and I will stand, in rainy weather and without an umbrella, in front of the hall where the German Diet is assembled, and there I will wait patiently until somebody comes out and proclaims the freedom of the press."

The fervour of this petition is partly humorous, but tells something true of the time; at least of the feelings spread among many hasty young men. They professed no reverence for the institutions of their native land. Democratic movements, that for some time had prevailed in certain "Unions of Students," had now become more negative. In 1817 their festival had something like a religious character; but in later years it was found impossible to unite their voices in singing even one Lutheran hymn—so great and manifold, they said, were their differences of belief! To tell more of their movements might lead us too far into German politics. Of Heine—eminent as a lyrical poet—some further account may be given.

HEINRICH HEINE, an Israelite, was born in 1799 (or, as some say, in 1800). His studies, begun at Bonn under the guidance of the elder Schlegel, were concluded at Göttingen, where, in 1825, he first made a profession of Christianity. Later he visited England, where, said he, "the machines are so clever they are like men, and the men are machines." In 1831 he went to Paris, and here was engaged as a political and literary contributor to several journals. In 1837 he received from the French government a pension, which was taken away in 1848. The remainder of his life was a long illness; but he retained the full use of his mental faculties, and for the most part was actively engaged in literature.

Heine has been celebrated as one of the most audacious

and out-spoken of unbelieving men. No man of his time uttered more profane words against the Christian religion; and few spoke more licentiously of social institutions. His leading qualities were wit, humour, poetic feeling, irony, vivacity—and malice. So great was his love of opposition, that it is impossible to define with certainty what he believed. There are found in his writings passages so irreverent and cynical that they cannot be quoted; yet, strange to say, there are found also some passages of Christian sentiment. Among the latter one is especially remarkable; and suggests the thought, that it might possibly be written only to display the writer's versatility. Next to this quality, the most prominent trait of his genius is the graphic individuality of his shorter poems. Some are like portraits; others are like finished genre pictures. His diction is simple, yet forcible; he can tell a story well in a few words; and the melody of some of his lyrical poems is perfect. Strong antithesis and bold transition are the most striking features of his style.

The most remarkable trait in his biography remains to be noticed. He could treat religion with contempt; yet could not forget it. Negation, love of conflict, and discontent—these were the elements of his character; and often, in the course of his long illness, he seemed to be waiting to hear again some uproar of revolution; yet at this time he was still haunted as it were by serious thoughts of religion. He expressed, on several occasions, regret for such passages in his writings as might seem favourable to atheism or pantheism, or might give offence by their want of reverence. He declared that, though he could not accept the creed of any church, he had returned, at last, to a belief that might be called deism—in other words, he believed in a personal God. Of the immortality of the soul he said, that he felt himself compelled to believe it, though his understanding was opposed to it. "The 'horror vacui' formerly ascribed to nature," said Heine, "belongs rather to the human soul." In accordance with his request,

passages from the Bible were sometimes read at his bedside. "Where health, wealth, and the understanding fail, there," said he, "Christianity begins." The sincerity of this recantation has been doubted. Some light is cast on it by a passage in his last will and testament, bearing the date 1851. Here he says :—

"I die believing in one sole God, the eternal Creator of the world, whose mercy I implore for my immortal soul. I regret that in my works I have sometimes written on holy subjects without the reverence that belongs to them. In doing so I was hurried along more by the spirit of the age than by my own inclination."

The life that seemed ending in 1851 was prolonged for nearly five years after that time. When his last hour was approaching, he was told plainly that death was near; and this, we are assured, was his reply :—"Soyez tranquille ! Dieu me pardonnera ; c'est son métier."—He died February 16, 1856.

It is indeed strange to find among the poems written by Heine one like the following—already referred to—which is entitled "Peace." The original form is an irregular metre without rhyme, which can hardly be well represented in any strict form of translation :—

"The clouds were white that all around the sun
Were glistening, and his softened noonday rays
O'er land and sea were spread ; the sea was calm.
Awake yet dreaming, on the deck I lay,
When looking up I suddenly beheld
A glorious form in flowing robes arrayed,
Snow-white and radiant, and with hands outspread
In benediction over land and sea.
That glowing noonday sun was now for me
Christ's heart of burning love, and thence did flow
The light and love and joy of all the world below.
From towers and spires unseen the bells were pealing,
Solemnly, sweetly, over the land and the sea ;
And, as in a dream, their melody, gently stealing
Over the water, invited us all to the shore,
To a land where rose the towers and spires whose bells

Were calling us home, by their soft, melodious pealing—
 To a land of rest, of hallowed, deep repose,
 Where hushed was every noise of earthly life;
 And here came walking men arrayed in white,
 Each bearing in his hand a palm; and when
 They met each other, there was heard no voice
 Of salutation; for a sign could show
 What all believed and loved; and all as one
 Looked up to the heart of Christ—the glowing sun
 Whose light and warmth o'er land and sea were shed;
 And all with voices blending meekly said,
 'For ever blessed be thy name, O Jesu.'"

This quotation must be the last of our excerpts from poetry; and writers later than Heine must be briefly noticed. Little more needs be said of "Young Germany;" for the school so-called was soon dissolved, and the men who once belonged to it did not care to represent its revolutionary doctrines in their later writings. Among them the most earnest and laborious author is KARL GUTZKOW, who has not rested content with the work of demolition, but has endeavoured to build up something; though unfortunately he builds in a way that must be called fictitious. This is especially the case in his "Ritter vom Geiste," a romance in nine volumes. Here he asserts that Christianity is an extinct religion, while he describes modern society as a structure founded on the sand of an egotistic conservatism. The social reformation he desires to see is to be introduced—he tells us—by a new brotherhood of men, who may be described as Templars of a new order. Their aim is to found an intellectual democracy; but their doctrine is hardly more than a revival of the vague cosmopolitan philanthropy popular in the eighteenth century.

Since 1830 almost every tendency of thought in religion and politics has been represented in poetry. Of the poets whose views may be called pantheistic only one can be named—LEOPOLD SCHEFER (1784-1862). His vague pantheism and his unreal optimism are both expressed in his "Layman's Breviary"—a book that has been rather popular.

The cheerful tone of many passages, and the good moral lessons here and there mingled with pantheistic dreamery, have recommended the writer's didactic verses to many sentimental readers who do not well understand his general tendency. His worship of nature is sometimes made attractive by means of original and poetical illustrations ; but his religion is after all little more than the result of his own healthfulness, his musical temperament, and—last, not least—his easy circumstances. He knew but little of the cares and vexations that beset ordinary men. If his life had been more practical, and his naturalistic faith more severely tried, then his joyous and almost child-like optimism might have demanded respect ; or at least would have been regarded as a marvellous phenomenon.

The minor poets of our time are too numerous to be mentioned here. Their best productions are lyrical, and among them are found many of which the general, indirect tendency is good. If space would allow, many of these writers might here be commended—among them HEBEL and GROTH, who have employed German dialects in their poems for the people ; also FREILIGRATH and several Austrian writers ; and we must at least name ADOLF STÖBER, KARL SIMROCK, JULIUS STURM, J. P. LANGE, and EMANUEL GEIBEL. Since 1830 the current of poetical literature has on several occasions been diverted from its true course by the disturbing influence of political strife. The war-poetry of 1848 was deplorable ; and the war of 1870 led hardly to any better results of an imaginative description.

In accordance with our first intention but little has been said of hymns intended for use in public worship ; and if a word is said here, it will have respect only to one point, having some general historical interest. On the whole, the tendency of hymn-writers has in the course of time become more and more subjective. They dwell now more on their own sentiments than on any objects of faith. The truth of this remark may be indicated by means of reference to a few names. Going back to mediæval times—how clearly

objective is the character of "the Holy Land"—one of the best of the lyrical poems by Walther von der Vogelweide. A like character is observable in many of the lowly verses of the Master Singers, and in many of the hymns written in the time of Hans Sachs. Already, in the seventeenth century, a subjective tone, though cheerful, is heard in Gerhardt; and Angelus Silesius is mystical. Tersteegen—writing on the eve of the rationalistic period—is still partly mystical; but when rationalism is spreading itself all around him, Gellert—one of the best men of his time—writes dry didactic verses, and then calls them hymns. In later days we have seen that Novalis—though his tendencies are Catholic—is still subjective, especially in the tone of his most popular hymns; and numerous like examples may be found in the hymn-writers of our own time. In general outlines like these, we see the historical truth of the conclusion—that on the whole, or in the long run, general literature—but especially poetry—tells something important respecting the religious and national life of a people. As faith decays, so poetry must decay. All studies that are ideal and humanizing are closely united together. The Christian Religion has long been the home and the centre of all idealism. If this religion be destroyed, modern Germany will be left in a condition that has hardly ever existed, since civilization first was spread in the world. Men will be left without any ideal toward which to aspire.

CHAPTER XV.

MYSTICISM.—SPECULATIVE PHILOSOPHY.

It is not easy to express strongly enough our sense of difficulty in approaching the subject to be treated in this chapter—the advance supposed to be made by mysticism and speculative philosophy toward a reconciliation with historical religion. To say nothing of the difficulty inherent in the theme itself—it is a fact, that in English no clear and well-defined terms exist as commonly accepted, by which processes of metaphysical thought can be so denoted, as to be generally understood.

One of our firmest words—as regards its preservation of a useful and self-consistent meaning or common acceptance—is the word “understanding.” Let it be granted, that this term shall not serve, as in Locke’s Essay, to include all knowledge derived from experience and reflexion; but here shall specially denote *one process*—manifold in its applications, yet always essentially the same—the process by which definite notions, however derived, as regards their materials, are compared and classified, as like or unlike; accordant or contradictory, and so forth. Let this in the first place be granted; and now it may be said with some clearness, that the chief dispute between Kant’s philosophy and that afterwards called “speculative” relates to “his limitations of the understanding.” Are its rules and conclusions valid; or such as correspond to realities—“things as they are in themselves”? This is the main question proposed by Kant.

Philosophy is not what certain scientific men have supposed it to be—"one of the special sciences." It is a study of sequence and union, as existing among the general ideas that govern *all* the sciences. A familiar example will make clear the point where we leave science and enter the domain of philosophy; and the same example will show where we transgress the boundary-line drawn by Kant.

A student is engaged in making experiments relating to electricity. First of all he takes for granted that glass will not conduct the force. He goes on to observe that it is conducted by iron, gold; silver, copper, and indeed by all the metals hitherto discovered. It is therefore concluded, that *all* metals are conductors of electricity; for in science—in a case like the present—"many" may often serve safely to represent "all." The process leading to the conclusion is inductive; but the basis assumed throughout is an idea of analogy—a belief that reason essentially like our own prevails in the plans of nature.

So far the student has been engaged in the pursuit of physical science. He now turns to consider how far that idea of analogy is well founded. He reflects, or thinks of thoughts. He compares and classifies them, as men of science classify metals, plants, and animals. That idea of analogy, he finds, is well founded in our understanding; but its application, he adds, must always be kept within the bounds of our experience. We must not think that because we observe certain analogies within the bounds of our experience, the general idea may be understood as a law pervading the universe, and displaying the mind of a Supreme Being. We can know, says Kant, nothing of ideas transcending the bounds of our understanding and experience; consequently we know nothing of God (p. 153), of an absolute, infinite mind. That which we know is limited by the bounds of *our own mind*; that is to say, by our human understanding. This is the first principle of the philosophy called "subjective." Its conclusions are all restricted by the limitations defined by Kant (p. 179).

On the contrary it is maintained that thought is *not* thus purely “subjective”—is not thus narrowly restricted—but is at once subjective and objective. The development of this proposition, if supported by dialectic reason, is called “speculative philosophy.” If, however, the same truth is merely asserted, or is supported only by appeals to intuition, sentiment, and personal conviction, the same substantial proposition—that one infinite mind pervades and informs the thoughts of finite minds—is now called “mysticism.” It should be added, however, that this last term is often somewhat loosely applied. For instance, a man may accept several tenets called mysterious; and yet escape the charge of mysticism so long as he holds himself aloof from controversy; but if he comes forward to defend his belief, and then finds himself driven to appeal for support to the strength of his own convictions, he will be stigmatized as a “mystic.” This was especially the case with Jacobi and his two friends, Hamann and Lavater (pp. 121, 127, 143). These discursive remarks may throw, perhaps, some light on certain uses of the words “philosophy,” “subjective,” “objective,” and “speculative;” lastly, on some uses of the word “mysticism.” It will be understood, however, that here no attempt will be made, either to “make easy” or to recommend any study of the great question opened by Kant. That would lead to speculative philosophy—a study of which no faithful and adequate analysis can ever be made popular. “*Est philosophia paucis contenta iudiciis, multitudinem consulto ipsa fugiens, eique ipsi et suspecta et invisæ; ut vel si quis universam velit vituperare, secundo id populo facere possit.*”*

The question may naturally suggest itself here—Why should a system of philosophy be even named in this place, if no logical account of it is to be given?—The answer must have the shape of an historical fact. In the course of the time 1805-30, there took place, in philosophy as in general

* Cicero; Tusc. Quæst. ii. 1.

literature, a movement which—as generally understood—had some tendency toward reconciliation with the chief tenets of positive religion. It is one thing to go through a course of thinking, and another to know its results. Now among these results one—which was the most important—agreed fairly, it was said, with the faith still retained by some intelligent men. It was asserted that philosophy now agreed well with the common sense of many plain men who cared more or less for the practical interests of religion. They were men who still believed as their ancestors had done for many centuries before the time when Hume and Kant came to make a puzzle of all faith. Old-fashioned people still believed that religion might partly be known—as to its first principles—by intuitive reason; that is to say, they could know certain truths, even if left without any exterior aid, borrowed either from the teaching of the Church, or from the Bible. These plain men—they still represent millions—held for example, as a tenet belonging to their natural theology, the first principle authoritatively declared in Scripture:—"He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Hob. xi. 6).

The validity of this faith was fully admitted by the "speculative" opponents of Kant. They granted that insight, without the aid of reflexion, could know truth. Jacobi had previously asserted in other words the same conviction: that divine truth might be felt in the heart, and known by intuition; and indeed had been so known in all ages. The same principle was more abstrusely expressed by means of certain metaphysical terms by which many have been sorely puzzled—especially by those two words, "subject" and "object." It was now said, in the language of the "speculative" school, that reason was not confined by such limitations as were defined by Kant; but was at once "subjective" and "objective."

Kepler once thought that the true movements of the planets might possibly be discovered, if it were first

assumed that they were accordant with certain mathematical ratios. Had he proceeded no further in the evolution of his ideas—now called “laws”—they might as fine guesses have excited admiration; but would have been classed with “subjective ideas;” such as may indeed, or even *must*—so Kant says of certain ideas—be entertained by the mind, though it cannot be shown that they correspond truly with any movements taking place in real objects. But Kepler went on with his calculations, firmly believing that his ideas were at once “subjective” and “objective”—in a word *true*—and the observations of centuries have shown that he was right. His confidence was not self-confidence, but was equivalent to a faith in reason, which for him was a light of which the source was divine. But we turn from astronomy to ethics, if we would see the importance of the distinction marked by the words “subjective” and “objective.”

Kant's teaching is subjective, as regards both ethics and religion. The language of his opponents, when they were ringing changes on “subject,” “object,” and other hard, metaphysical terms, was indeed tedious and mysterious; but their words had a serious meaning. In England the few who cared for philosophy were especially made butts of ridicule. Coleridge, for example, was in his way one of the chief martyrs of philosophy. Carlyle has made his great contemporary appear ridiculous and pitiable; though there are some better traits in the portraiture of which a specimen may be given:—

“He was thought to hold”—says Carlyle—“the key of German and other transcendentalisms; knew the sublime secret of believing by the ‘reason’ what the ‘understanding’ had been obliged to fling out as incredible; and could still, after Hume and Voltaire had done their best and worst with him, profess himself an orthodox Christian, and say and print to the Church of England, with its singular old rubrics and surplices at Allhallowtide, ‘Esto perpetua.’ A sublime man; who alone in those dark days had saved his crown of spiritual manhood; escaped from the black materialisms, and revolutionary deluges, with ‘God,’ ‘freedom,’ immortality still his: a king of men.

The practical intellects of the world did not much heed him, or carelessly reckoned him a metaphysical dreamer; but to the rising spirits of the young generation, he had this dusky sublime character; and sat there as a kind of Magus, girt in mystery and enigma." [The writer next describes a visit to Coleridge's home at Highgate; and then goes on with the portraiture.] "He would perhaps take you to his own peculiar room, high up, with a rearward view, which was the chief view of all—a really charming outlook, in fine weather. Here for hours would Coleridge talk concerning all conceivable or inconceivable things; and liked nothing better than to have an intelligent, or failing that, even a silent and patient human listener. He distinguished himself to all that ever heard him as at least the most surprising talker extant in this world—and to some small minority, by no means to all, as the most excellent. Brow and head were round, and of massive weight. The deep eyes of a light hazel were as full of sorrow as of inspiration; confused pain looked mildly from them, as in a kind of mild astonishment. A heavy-laden, high-aspiring, and surely much-suffering man. His voice, naturally soft and good, had contracted itself into a plaintive snuffle and sing-song; he spoke as if preaching—you would have said preaching earnestly and also hopelessly the weightiest things. I still recollect his 'object' and 'subject,' terms of continual recurrence in the Kantian province; and how he sung and snuffled them into 'om-m-mject' and 'sum-m-mject,' with a kind of solemn shake or quaver, as he rolled along."

Why should Carlyle contribute the aid of his sarcastic humour, in order to associate the notions of intuition and nonsense? That had been already done well enough, when Schelling—of whose views Coleridge was talking—admitted that faith was his first principle. He asserted that the *idea* of God was inseparably united with our implied belief in his *existence*. On this faith—said the philosopher—all our religious knowledge is founded. It was replied by Kant's disciples: that "having the *idea* of £100 and having the *cash* are two distinct things." This telling remark was at once received as a verdict; and for the most part it still remains unquestioned. It is tacitly assumed that existence as ascribed in one case to the Infinite, and in the other to a sum of money, is one and the same predicate; and that among all possible examples of reality the best is gold. This is the one orthodox creed of millions; but why should

a man who did not hold it be persecuted; or made to appear ridiculous? Why should the terminology he employed be treated as ludicrous, because it was not understood by his visitor?—Coleridge was treating a question of vital interest to every thoughtful man—a question then earnestly discussed, as one that Hume and Kant had made inevitable. Of all the positions ever maintained by philosophy, in opposition to religious faith, the strongest was that held by Kant. The first aim of his opponents was not to puzzle men of plain common sense; but to correct error in minds already led far astray by metaphysical inquiry. Accordingly it was not absurd to use for this purpose—the exposure of metaphysical error—such concise and convenient terms as “subjective” and “objective.” These are words frequently employed by clear and able writers on ethics and theology, whether Catholic or Protestant. They are terms correctly used by Baur, a rationalist Protestant, and by the Catholic author, Möhler, in their controversy on the respective bases of their opposite confessions. Dorner, in his learned “History of Protestant Theology,” frequently introduces the same scholastic terms. Their use and importance will most readily be shown when we turn to notice finally the ethical position maintained by Kant.

When independence and finality are claimed for Kant’s system of ethics (p. 169) the position is defined as “subjective.” On the contrary, when it is contended that his own admissions (pp. 157-8) ought to lead him *beyond* his own conclusion, and to a belief in the historical reality of a revealed religion, the position is at once “subjective” and “objective.” It is at once supposed, that a revelation has been urgently required by the depravity of mankind; and that it has been granted. Religion is therefore viewed as at once internal and external, subjective and objective. If this last term is now and then used *alone*—in defining the nature or character of a revelation—this is done for the sake of emphasis; as for example when we speak of

"objective morality," as distinct from "moral feeling." Let a circle be equally divided, so that the two semi-circles may be set apart from each other; and let one be placed below the other. The lower may now represent our capacity of accepting and knowing divine truth; the higher may represent the truth itself. These correspond each to the other, so that it may be said, that what was wanted has been given. The figure may have some use, though it but feebly indicates the truth—that ethics and religion are at once distinct and inseparable. Common sense sees this truth. As surely as man possesses the senses and faculties adapted to his practical life in this world; so surely do we find that he is here surrounded by a world of nature, in which provisions have been made to meet his wants. As surely as he has a capacity for knowing divine truth; so surely has that divine truth been revealed. This is the position held by the opponents of Kant's philosophy; especially as regards its assertion of ethical isolation and independence. Already a considerable space has been given to an analysis of his moral teaching (pp. 166-76); yet here it must be noticed once more, in order that its failure may be shown in the light of a strong contrast.

Kant's system of ethics may be described as the most reverent and at the same time—for intelligent men—the most dangerous of all those philosophical systems that are opposed to the essence of religion. Kantian teaching is not directly and obviously anti-religious in every part—surely not—but for all that it is simply *non-religious*. As a summary and conclusion of all that has been said of that moral teaching, one final example of its practical application may be noticed here. Its strength will thus be shown on one side; its weakness on the other; and respecting its value—common sense—as Kant says, "practical reason"—will pronounce a verdict.

"The rule of rules," he says, may thus be given:—"Act so that your own act may exemplify a good rule of

conduct *for all men.*" Obviously this is in substance equivalent to the "golden rule:"—"As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise."

Why should the rule be obeyed by all men? As given in the Gospels, that law of love appeals to our conscience, our reason, and our human sympathy; but also refers to a divine authority. The philosopher appeals first to the immediate authority of conscience, and secondly to our "practical reason." After all, however, the authority to which he appeals is *only* man; and man—as he confesses—is a fallible and sinful creature. Suppose the question—Who makes this law authoritative? Your own conscience has issued that law—says Kant—and the voice of conscience is to be obeyed *as if* it were the voice of God himself. The weakness—the utter failure of true independence—confessed in these two little words "as if," will be noticed more distinctly in another place. Here for a moment let them pass without censure; and next let it be supposed that a moral experiment is to be made. The practical moral value of Kant's teaching is to be fairly tried in a case like the following:—

A man, in the latest hour of his life, gives to a friend a paper representing money left for the support of an infant son. The transaction is witnessed by no third person. The father dies. The friend is left legally free. No created being knows that the money was confided to his trust. He himself knows nothing of any religion. He can use the money just as his conscience dictates. For a moment the thought suggests itself that he can keep the money for his own use. The suggestion is instantly repelled by the man's conscience—his sole lawgiver and judge. There is no need here of an appeal to any higher authority. This—to use Kant's phraseology—is an example of the "imperative" character belonging to the dictates of conscience. It speaks rapidly; yet with the authority of a supreme arbiter. The just man obeys instantaneously, and without a thought of any religion.

Here Kant's own assertion of moral independence is well exemplified in the case of a faithful friend. He fairly represents, we trust, many millions of men. But *all* men are not like that friend; and it is equally true that all duties are not as clear and sacred as that imposed in the case of the deposit. In other cases some appeal to reason may be required. Kant therefore goes on to show next, how actions morally bad or destructive are also—when viewed in the light of reason—self-contradictory. Let fraud be made the common practice of trustees; the end must be, that no trustees will be appointed. Faith destroyed—one interest will follow another in the way to ruin; and at last society itself must be destroyed. That which is morally wrong is intellectually false, and with regard to society is destructive.

The conclusion is indeed true; but such truth as this—cold, hard and dry—will never be a true substitute for religion. If society is to live, and to maintain a progressive movement, virtues higher than common honesty will be continuously demanded; and motives stronger than reason can supply will be required. Men will not obey an authority not greater than their own. Reason—having no basis in faith—will never be able to enforce duties leading to martyrdom and self-sacrifice. If faith in the invisible must be renounced—if God has never revealed to men his own ethical character or will—then it is difficult, when looking downward, to draw the line beneath which it will be impossible for man to fall; but looking upward, it is unhappily true, that we are well able to draw, with some fairly approximate correctness, the line above which he will never be able to rise. Let it be remembered that we are speaking of men guided solely by their own reason.

Christ's followers, aided by his grace, may obey his commands, and find them at last not irksome; but their strength, arising out of faith, is more than the force that can be supplied by "practical reason." When all faith like theirs is forgotten; when men are left dependent on

the force of such motives as may be called ordinary and secular—how shall we estimate the moral results that may be reasonably expected?—When the authority of religion is annulled, it is not probable that authority of a merely historical nature can be made permanent. Hoping for the best possible result—we may perhaps foresee that gradually the common sense of the majority will prevail; and that consequently the virtues most obviously connected with tangible and practical interests will be most respected. But what are these virtues?—Apparently those which, as defined by heathen moralists, have been called minor or inferior—such as frugality, foresight, and prudence; all made true servants of self-love. Already we see that where faith, self-sacrifice, and moral heroism are alike declining, the minor virtues—not contemptuously so called—are more and more coming to the front in the battle of modern life.

Kant himself was conscious of the weakness inherent in his own teaching—the want of faith confessed in those melancholy words “as if.” They imply at once a wish to accept and an incapability of accepting the objective truth of Christianity. Morally considered, Christian teaching, he said, is true and holy. The ideal here set forth, in the Gospels, is a light clearer than all philosophy. The deepest wants and the most earnest inquiries of human nature lead on towards this faith (pp. 155-8). Kant’s confession of failure made more earnest the ethical character of several later inquirers, who were animated and guided by the latest teaching of Fichte (pp. 191-2). Surely, they said, the moral guidance so urgently needed has been granted. He who has made men responsible moral agents—who has made them capable of recognizing even holiness itself—has surely made known to them the dictates of *his own* moral will. A disposition to believe—to accept divine truth, as revealed in the Gospel—was expressed by Fichte, in his later writings. Others, to escape from unbelief, found a shelter in mysticism. One rather eloquent writer—Steffens—was led by his study of Christian ethics to accept the

Gospel as a divine revelation. And now, in these circumstances, there arose a new school of philosophy.

This philosophy, called "speculative," has the same first principle that is also assumed in mysticism. Speculation looks forth beyond the barriers set up by Kant in his analysis of the understanding. Of those barriers or limitations we have noticed especially one, viz., that which excludes all knowledge of God—even the knowledge of his existence (p. 153). In speculative philosophy this limitation is regarded as Kant's fundamental error. It is asserted that, on the contrary, philosophy leads us to re-assert the truth—first accepted by religious faith—that God reveals not only his own eternal existence, but also his own thoughts, and his own will. God is a spirit, omnipresent; and his thoughts are made known to us in nature, in our conscience, and in revealed religion. It is moreover asserted that, as regards several religious tenets—rejected alike by rationalism, and by Kant's criticism—the results of speculative philosophy accord in substance with the doctrines of revelation. To reduce to a minimum this asserted concordance, speculative philosophy does not apply to any faith—not even to gross heathenish forms of religion—such terms of contemptuous rejection as have been often employed by deists when speaking of Christianity.

Our further notices of both mysticism and speculative philosophy must be mainly historical. There are first to be noticed some writings that appeared a few years after the death of Fichte (1814). His own later teaching (pp. 182-92) was mystic; and led to a change of opinions, that to the earlier rationalists might have been amazing, if they could have seen it. "I have," says one of their school, writing in Semler's time, "a neighbour whose digestion is good; and he reads classic authors. He is in most respects an intelligent man; and yet as regards his religion, there is one strange thing to be told—this intelligent man still believes in the possibility of supernatural events!"

The writer's amazement would have been increased, if he

could have read the more speculative writings of Steffens, especially those relating to his tellurian theory. These writings are strongly characteristic of the time to which they mostly belong (1819-31) and therefore demand some notice. They represent a tendency that was concurrent with the rise and development of speculative philosophy. There prevailed in the time of Steffens a tendency to regard nature as everywhere existing in union with the sympathies of moral agents. This general idea was called "mysticism." The word is vague, and it should be added that it will never be employed here with any contemptuous or derisive intention. Among "mystics" have been numbered men of deep thought, and wide sympathy; others not less remarkable for dialectic ability. But the most noticeable of all facts in their history is their apparently unintentional agreement—their common acceptance of certain religious tenets. The fall of angels and men; the consequent deterioration of the material world; a final restoration of peace through the mediation of Jesus Christ—these are the tenets made especially prominent in the writings of the mystics. In order to notice fairly their common belief, it should first be divested of all the mere accidents with which it is too often associated—visions, ecstasies, and fanciful interpretations of Scripture. These do not constitute the essence of mysticism. It has its source, not in such accidents, but in earnest religious feelings and endeavours to attain a union of thought that can never be the result of knowledge founded on the understanding alone.

A mysterious doctrine in theology may be accepted by a mind that has no tendency toward mysticism. The mind finds sufficient the authority on which the doctrine is founded; then accepts it, without a thought of seeking for any union of the doctrine with reason. He believes; but the mystic—as he tells us—sees and knows. The mystic first accepts the doctrine; and next endeavours to show, that it contains evidence of its own truth. But on what authority is his faith grounded? On his own intuition. As

he tells us, he first sees the truth in its own inner light, and now recognizes evidences of the truth everywhere throughout creation. If he could succeed in constructing a system of logic, by which his faith might be made clear to others, he would be classed with speculative philosophers. As he does not succeed, he is styled a mystic.

HEINRICH STEFFENS, a Norwegian (1773-1845), was a man of earnest character, who first gained a reputation by his writings on geology. His mysticism consisted chiefly in his theory of a sympathy—in ordinary times occult—existing between the material world and the human soul. In poetry—especially in Wordsworth's poems—the theory is often supposed; but with Steffens it was made a subject of serious inquiry. In 1831 he published a book telling how he had returned to the Lutheran Confession, in which he had been educated, and from which he had wandered away during the course of his scientific studies. It is in this book that he gives, in connection with his mystic theory, some noticeable remarks respecting his own belief in the possibility of miracles.

"Despite all the progress of science," he says, "a belief in the supernatural manifests itself everywhere, as an irrepressible element in human nature. Though driven back, again and again, it always returns to the contest against exclusive physical science and rationalism. A thousand cases of supposed supernatural interference in the order of nature have been found to be erroneous; still the belief in such events remains, and can be neither demonstrated nor refuted." There must be some ground for it, says Steffens. He then refers to the popular belief, or notion, that commotions or revolutions in human society have been frequently or generally attended with extraordinary phenomena in nature. "Everyone," he says, "must acknowledge the fact that man, as an individual, is intimately connected with the system of nature; that his existence, indeed, depends, as a part, on the whole to which it belongs. But we assert more than this. We maintain

that history, as a whole, or as a total organization of all human events and relations, and nature, or the external world, have always existed in mysterious and intimate union. And as man was ordained to be the regulative principle in nature, so when his influence has not been duly exercised, the restless and violent elements of nature have displayed their ascendancy. This assertion is founded on the general convictions of mankind, which remain even in the present age. That a general sentiment in accordance with our assertion has pervaded all nations, and that in every age of the world, during times of extreme commotion in human society, the people have expected with dread some extraordinary or destructive movements in nature, is a fact too well known to be denied."—All that is named here—says Steffens, in another place—suggests no reason for supposing that miracles can occur in nature, when no correspondent moral wonders are revealed as taking place in the spiritual world. To deists, who cannot believe that man has lost the place he was intended to occupy, and that his fall and recovery are connected with moral interests too vast to be estimated by our minds—in their actual and present stage of development—to deists of this class it cannot seem reasonable, that for the sake of man's salvation, the spiritual world should disclose wonders transcending such movements as take place on earth and in accordance with the ordinary course of nature.

Steffens goes on to contend that nothing less than some paramount moral and spiritual interest can afford a basis for belief in miracles. He carefully draws a line between his own faith and the credulity of those who are ready to give credit to anything wonderful. First of all, he says, I must see an analogy of the highest possible kind before I can admit even the probability of events transcending the analogies with which we are made acquainted in the course of our ordinary experience. That the force called physical and that called moral are connected as parts belonging to one organism is a truth granted as readily by materialists as by idealists. The

former regard as merely nominal or theoretical the distinction made between these two forces ; and consequently their connection is naturally explained as a sequence, equivalent to a transmission of force. Thus an act morally unjust excites anger, and this passion expresses itself in an act of violence. The act and the anger are two physical expressions of one force. Here nothing more need be said to show how materialists—whose doctrine makes the usual course of nature absolute—must consistently reject as impossible all events described as miraculous. If nature, as known through our senses, is absolute, then we can know nothing of a divine Power, *not* controlled or limited by physical force. “No such Power exists,” says the materialist, whose rejection of miracles is but one item in his general negation of religion. For him the thought of a miracle is an absurdity ; but it does not follow that a charge of absurdity can be fairly preferred against a man whose theory is opposed to that called materialism.

For Steffens there exists some authority in the general implied faith of religious men in all ages. Their faith makes him unwilling to admit that a miracle is impossible. He still however demands evidence stronger than any vague ideas, immemorial traditions and dim forebodings of Christ’s coming ; though these have been entertained by multitudes of men. In a word, he must—before he can accept as facts the miracles narrated in the Gospels—first of all accept and believe firmly a whole series of moral and religious facts, each wonderful in itself, and all culminating in an event that is but feebly described when it is called the “miracle of miracles.”

This fact—the Advent—is for Steffens the one chief antecedent, without which he can hardly—comparatively speaking—find any interest in accounts of miracles. Let it be understood, then, that he does not speak of miracles in general, but of certain miracles ; and again, that he is speaking of these as viewed in one light—the light of his own faith in the Person by whom they were wrought. He

first accepts a truth which here may be briefly defined as his *first* tenet ; he also accepts as true a doctrine respecting certain miracles, and this may be simply called his *last* tenet. He gives no demonstration of the first, and none of the last ; but he says, most justly, that a man who believes the first may without difficulty believe also the last. He does not, by dint of historical evidence, endeavour to compel an Ebionite—one who cannot accept the first—to accept the last. The miraculous acts ascribed to Christ—thus, in effect, Steffens begins his self-defence against the charge of credulity—these acts—as I view them—are the acts of God. You may say what you please of my faith, and of my logic in showing how one part of that faith corresponds with the other ; but you must not say that I accept as valid certain accounts of miracles, while I still regard them as acts that may reasonably be ascribed to an eminently good man. I do not say anything like this ; on the contrary, my whole design—in this self-defence—is to show how my belief in miracles, which may be called the last tenet in my creed, agrees with my whole creed, and especially with the tenet that I call the first. This is the defensive position assumed by Steffens ; and it is one interesting at the present time. Accordingly it may not be out of place if this remarkable passage in his autobiography is more particularly noticed here.

Fixed ideas were institutions maintained and venerated by large numbers among the educated men who lived in the time of Steffens. Their first fixed idea was one asserting that nature is an automaton—a perfect “perpetuum mobile,” at first created by God, and now left to go on for ever, winding itself up while otherwise working in an order that can never be changed. Miracles are therefore impossible.

Their next fixed idea was one—if possible—still more firmly rooted in their minds. Their general belief as regards the Person of Christ may fairly be called Ebionite, if we notice only those more respectful and moderate among the opinions held by men called rationalists. If their

extreme views (pp. 62-3) were noticed here again, the name "Ebionite" could not be correctly ascribed to them. It is used however for two reasons:—first because it is fair on the whole, and secondly because it is not the name of any existing sect. It hardly needs be added, that men who were in fact Ebionites—as regards their belief respecting Christ—would often call in question either the common sense or the honesty of educated men, when they said they believed in miracles. Sarcastic observations on this point were mostly echoes of words often spoken in England in the course of the eighteenth century. The third fixed idea in the minds of deists and rationalists in Germany, as in England, was the impossibility of sincere belief in any miracles.

Meanwhile it is to be remembered that in Germany, as in England, Christian apologists had placed in the front as it were the evidential power of miracles. In the defence of their faith they had assigned a place of paramount importance to their own historical argument, which was based on the miracles recorded in the Gospels. It was implied that if this could fail, all must fail (p. 60).

This argument has already been defined (pp. 33-35) and at the same time the position of self-defence assumed by Steffens has also been defined, though without any reference to his writings. To repeat what has been said (p. 34) "he finds"—so he tells us—"in the New Testament, and in the closest possible union with accounts of miracles, a series of ethical teachings so holy that their authority is clear as the sun at noon-day; but more—he finds there also the records of a life in which humanity is indissolubly united with divinity." He cannot—he declares—accept an Ebionite definition of that life. How then can he consistently reject the evidence afforded by the miracles ascribed to Christ?

Steffens endeavours first to make clear and definite his own position, and to suggest that the commonplace experience on which deists base their rejection of miracles is not a final authority. The narratives, he says, that are

rejected as incredible because they contain accounts of miracles, contain also a revelation that we cannot reject. Were it first made possible to isolate the miracles, the question raised respecting their historical validity would assume a new aspect; but so closely are the two elements, the ethical and the miraculous, here united, that there appears to be left for us no possibility of accepting the former while rejecting the latter. Both lie beyond the bounds of our ordinary experience. The leading ideas in the writer's argument or confession of faith may here be given in the form of a paraphrase :—

"I am an explorer of nature, and know something of the method to which our progress in physical science is largely indebted. Excellent for its purpose is this strict method of induction; but it has its limitations. It leads us from point to point in the world of experience, and everywhere leads to an acquaintance with things finite and dependent; then leaves us desiring to know more—especially more of ourselves, our duty, and our destiny—moreover, believing that we can know more. Why the faith if it have no object?—The question is not set aside for ever when it is waived. It returns from age to age, and replies—more or less mixed with errors—are suggested by the religions of many peoples. It is not reasonable to say that, because many erroneous answers have been given, the true one can never be found. . . . There is in my creed nothing that can retard or discourage the progress of science. I have nothing to say in favour of aimless miracles, reported as here and there or now and then appearing, so as to make uncertain all our calculations based on experience. I speak only of certain manifestations of divine power attending the Advent of Our Lord; and I am therefore at a loss to know how my faith can be described as one 'setting itself in opposition to the laws of nature.' All our science is based first on observations of nature; and next our inductive reasonings follow, while we take for granted all along the fact, that nature is still pursuing her habitual course. I do not see how any interference with the 'laws' so discovered takes place, when I accept as true certain miracles attending the life of Christ. My faith might be fairly represented were it said, that I believe in one supreme, miraculous revelation of divine goodness, wisdom, and power; and in the accompanying acts especially called 'miracles,' which acts were as so many words of one revelation. Here wonders are so inseparably united with ethical and spiritual authority, that while I submit myself to the latter I do not see it possible to reject

the former. Here then faith in the supernatural, that elsewhere might be a disturbing influence, is, I submit, in its right place. My faith, thus defined, as relating to certain acts, does not commit me to any vague or general theory respecting various other events called miraculous or supernatural. Among these some may be wholly fictitious; while others may have some true grounds. However that may be, they have no connection with the faith that I would now defend.

"Our Saviour's life in this world is our basis of faith. If that which we cannot understand must therefore be blotted out of the pages of history, it is not faith in miracles that must *first* disappear. First must disappear our belief in the presence of One whose coming is a wonder—to say the least, as great as that of a new world of light and order suddenly arising out of chaos [pp. 238-40]. Is it conceivable, that the same creative Power by whom the night of our souls is dispelled; by whom we are liberated from the thralldom of nature; whose light is now spread over the world; yea, over the lives of those men who still deny His advent—is it to be thought possible, that this Power should in his own life on earth make manifest no energies surpassing those classed with the facts of our ordinary experience? You cannot give me an account of man's true nature—his ethical character—so long as you confine your observation to the powers developed in other forms of animal life."

The writer supposes here that his own line of demarcation—which is chiefly ethical—is one that scientific men will take to be correct. He does not foresee the character and tendency of certain anthropological speculations made prominent in the writings of Vogt, Haeckel, Spencer, and other philosophers of the present age. According to the firm belief of Steffens, that supposed early stage of development in which man was for the most part like the other simiæ was a state of the world in which man did not exist. Such instinct and cunning as animals can show can never, he says, make a man. Man, for the animals around him, is an unknown being. What are all his peculiar powers, his ideas, his sentiments, when viewed in relation to the instincts possessed by the earth's older inhabitants?—His lower faculties, those most like their own—above all his power of destruction—may excite their terror; but as for the rest of his powers, the higher they rise, as expressions

of benevolence, sympathy and reverence, the more deeply are they concealed. If then man's first appearance in the world must for the rest of the earth's inhabitants remain a mystery—a something unknown—why, when One infinitely higher and holier than fallen man comes into this world—why should not his coming be attended by mysteries? Obviously, Steffens has here no intention of making the suggested parallel complete. Man, though a fallen creature, can recognize a holiness that is not his own. This is the basis of religion. When holiness is clearly *seen* as manifested in perfect union with human nature, the fact is still for man's intelligence mysterious or wonderful; but it must not be said that it is unknown. All this Steffens doubtless intends us to understand. He next proceeds as follows:—

“I see One walking in lowliness on this earth—teaching, healing souls and bodies, forgiving sins. He is followed by few; comprehended by none. His might is veiled by his profound humiliation. Otherwise does worldly power assert its presence—coming forth in proud martial array, marching on over conquered lands, crushing down the peoples and breaking their hearts [pp. 239-40] and all for what purpose?—To establish a temporal dominion; to raise a proud structure that must soon fall into ruins. Tedious would it be to recite even the names of states, lawgivers, systems of ethics, and schools of philosophy, that have all passed away since the days when our Lord was teaching in Galilee. . . . Now—what is there left in the world that is firm and safe?—And as regards the future, what hope have we save one, of which his own word is the sole basis? If men would allow the history of the world to speak to them, and would calmly listen, they would be led to the belief to which I have been led—to that one belief without which, not only miracles, but thousands of undisputed facts must for ever remain mysteries, as to their true nature and their final intention. For the aid of those who wish to be led to the truth, I would tell simply the way in which my own doubts and difficulties have been overcome. It will be understood henceforth, that wherever I write of miracles, they are only those named in the Gospels.

“But why name together several miracles, and thus make the question more difficult. I have been led to study especially one fact and its results—the fact that, on the third day after the Crucifixion of our Lord, his afflicted few disciples—suddenly awakened out of the depth of their grief and depression—came forth boldly, declaring the fact

of his resurrection. Their testimony was received by multitudes and has since their time been accepted by untold millions. This is the great historical fact of Christianity. In the first place it is to be viewed in itself, and next with a reference to the spiritual life awakened and sustained in the millions who have reposed faith in that testimony. This fact of the resurrection having always maintained its essential union with a spiritual power must be divine. May it not be said, that evidences of the resurrection have been thus made clearer, brighter by the lapse of nearly eighteen hundred years?—It is in the light of this physical and spiritual miracle and its vast results—the expansion of a world-conquering spiritual power—it is in this light that I now view all other miracles. And I can now see clearly the cause of all my former difficulty in accepting them. They were for me incredible, as acts ascribed to One of whose Person my views—though even then reverential—were extremely defective. Here was the source of my error. It was no especial want of faith in miracles; but a deeper unbelief. There was visible to me only a world of finite events, and among these were classed even those belonging to the life of our Lord, during the years when he lived in Galilee and visited Judæa. I saw only the facts of his humiliation. . . . Now nearly eighteen hundred years have passed away. Were such views as once were mine truly correspondent to the life and teaching of Christ, what would now be the results of that teaching—the results that might be reasonably expected? Affectionate reminiscences would be cherished for some few years in the minds of true disciples; but these disciples would die, and their devotion would be forgotten. Possibly some institution founded by them might for a time preserve his memory. But the world is restless; the doctrines, actions, records of good men are lost in the lapse of centuries. At last their very names are forgotten; or are preserved only in books. This is a summary of that process of decay from which no human institutions are exempt. How then—in the case that has been supposed—could a few lowly disciples of Jesus make permanent in such a world as this the authority of their crucified Lord? How could they perpetuate even his name?—They went forth and preached boldly in obedience to his command, and in opposition to a world more formidable than can now be imagined, and that world was overcome. It has passed away.

“ Since then some three score generations of men have appeared and disappeared. Nations, languages, sciences so-called have perished. Has the teaching of Christ passed away? No; it has given to mankind a new destiny; to our souls a new reason for existence. We are changed, not only in our circumstances, but also in our inmost thoughts—so far changed, that the moral condition of that ancient world, which

Christ's coming overthrew, is a state of existence to which we cannot go back, even if we would. That is for us a mystery of iniquity, of which it is not possible that we can now have a clear and adequate conception. Since his coming, history—so far as it is truly progressive—has been created by Him. Our actual state of existence is filled with his presence. Unbelievers, who formally reject his authority, stand morally on the ground that he has created; and for their existence, moral and physical, they depend on the civilization that He has established. Ideas of man's dignity and freedom—such as were utterly unknown in ancient Greece and Rome—are now made familiar to the minds of millions, who never dream of the truth, that those ideas were first revealed by Christ (pp. 204-6). For millions—partly submissive to his authority, or still in their hearts rebellious—it is simply impossible now to escape from his influence. Indifference is but a name; no such state of mind is practicable. The words that so long ago predicted this result must be remembered. How clearly they are fulfilled in our times! We must be classed with his adversaries; or we must submit, and henceforth acknowledge Him as our Lord. There is no other way. We must give to Him—ourselves. He to whom this surrender is due is the centre of a new life; the source of a new and holy creation.—'He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.' " [John xii. 25; cf. Matt. x. 39; xvi. 25; Mark viii. 35; Luke ix. 24.]

Not a word needs be added, to make clear the order in which the writer has studied the evidences afforded by miracles. He is *first* led by ethical evidence to his confession of faith; and in the light of his faith the difficulties attending miracles disappear.

Steffens, we have seen, places in the front of all other evidence that which we have called ethical. He finds in the Gospels and in the writings of St. Paul a portraiture of which the various traits have been drawn by several hands. So perfect is their ethical concord, and so commanding the character thus portrayed that—as Steffens concludes—suspicions of late invention, of collusion, or of accidental coincidence, must be rejected. The result is, that there remains only one way in which we can account for the existence of such a portraiture. We are compelled to admit that it is historically true. This once believed, says the writer,

facts that once seemed impossible come within the range of our belief. He next goes on—as we have partly shown—to support his own ethical argument by adducing in favour of Christianity such evidences as are seen in the history of the Church, and in the spread of Christian civilization. The Church, he says—although it has been torn asunder, and too often inwardly distracted by controversies—has nevertheless kept burning in the world a light that is to shine forth more brightly in the future.

Here our limitations (p. 1) must exclude further notice of the ecclesiastical argument. The main result to be noticed is this:—the writer is led by a firm belief in Christ's divinity to accept as historical facts such miracles as are recorded in the Gospels.

So far there is nothing in the faith here defined that can be justly called mystical. It is however true that, in the time of Steffens, there were more or less current among men of his class certain ideas that made comparatively easy their acceptance of miracles. These ideas were such as might fairly be called mystic, and for the most part were borrowed from the writings of Jacob Böhme. The fact is one having some interest—as connected with the speculative views of Schelling and Hegel—and therefore must be more distinctly noticed; but only in an historical way. The two writers last-named borrowed, it is said, some ideas from Böhme; it would be more correct to say, they borrowed one idea. The fact is not concealed in their writings; on the contrary, it is distinctly confessed. Obviously their confession was one that might be construed so as to make contemptible the pretensions of their philosophy; for nothing could be easier than to show that Böhme's writings were chaotic and unintelligible. Their strange terminology; their mingling of poetry with reasoning; above all their wonderful philology—ascribing meanings to syllables—these traits naturally invited ridicule. Of all the controversy that followed, little can be told here. It must, however, be distinctly noticed that Schelling's treatise on "Freedom"—

published in 1809—is founded on the central idea of Böhme's theosophy. As afterwards developed, under the name of speculative philosophy, this idea led to results that on one side were condemned as pantheistic; on the other were described as conclusions accordant with orthodox Christology.

There are good reasons for supposing, that the mystic teaching described sometimes as "leading men back to Christianity," was first of all, and long ago, borrowed from the Church. This is said with especial reference to such ideas of Christology and mediation as are found in several of the mediæval writers called mystic. More than a little learning would be required to show clearly, in an historical way, how far our supposition may be true. Hitherto the writings of such men as Eckart, Tauler and Böhme have for the most part been regarded as mysteries, of which no analysis is possible. Nevertheless the agreement of these writers is remarkable, when they endeavour to express their chief ideas—above all those relating to Christology.

There is, however, in Böhme one idea that might, from its prominence in his writings, be called his own. It is the idea afterwards developed by Schelling and Hegel in their speculative philosophy; but in substance it is found in Eckart, who lived in the fourteenth century. He was a Dominican, whose metaphysical teaching was condemned by the Church.

Tauler (1290-1361), a monk who for a time was Eckart's disciple, wrote and preached in a more practical strain; though the basis of his doctrine was mystic. Many passages in his sermons are full of the eloquence not derived from studied diction, but springing immediately from the heart. "True humiliation," he says in one place, "is an impregnable fortress. All the world may try to carry it by storm; but they cannot. Dear soul, sink into the abyss of thine own nothingness, and then let a tower fall to crush thee; or all the demons from hell oppose thee; or let earth and all the creatures that live thereon, set themselves in battle array

against thee—they shall not prevail, but shall be made to serve thee.” Such was Tauler’s preaching on his favourite theme. His chief work is entitled “The Imitation of Christ in His Humiliation.” The doctrine made most prominent in the writings of Tauler teaches us that religion is a life in the souls of men. All that is historically true must be conceived in the soul, in order that it may become spiritually true. But the word “spiritual,” as used by Tauler, is not to be understood in a negative or merely internal sense; for he teaches that what is spiritual is also practical. There are superficial thoughts that have no power and lead to no practice; but there are also thoughts that are essentially united with deep feeling and a corresponding practice, and these, he says, are spiritual thoughts. He asserts as necessary a union of faith with good works.

The leading traits of mysticism are seen again in the little book at first entitled “Der Franckforter”—afterwards called “Eyn deutsch Theologia”—which was written probably in the fourteenth century. In its speculative teaching it agrees well on the whole with the metaphysics of Eckart and Tauler; and the ethics of the latter are concisely yet clearly given in simple words. The fall of man is here viewed as a continuous act of man’s will, in the assertion of itself, in opposition to the will of the Infinite. Man’s will is the centre and the source of a world of disunion. Before his “fall,” or separation from the Infinite, his will acted as a magnet on all creatures, and held them in union and subordination; but by the perversion of his will all creatures are perverted. It is vain to attempt, in the first place, any outward reformation. Man must resign his will; must claim no independent life in or for himself; must not imagine that he can possess anything good, as power, knowledge, or happiness. All such thoughts as are expressed in the words “I” and “mine” must be renounced. Such resignation is the birth of the second Adam. In him the whole creation is to be restored to its primeval order. This birth of the second Adam must take place in every man

who would be a Christian. He must become weary of himself and of all created and finite things, and, relinquishing all his desires, must resign his whole soul and will. Though good works wrought in the life of the renewed soul are holy, yet more holy is the inner, silent self-sacrifice that can never be fully expressed in good words or good works; for by that inner sacrifice the soul is translated into the one true life beyond all death—the eternal life in which sin, and self, and sorrow, and all things that belong to the creature apart from God, are for ever lost.

Such was the teaching of the mediæval mystics who wrote in German. Their ideas were faithfully preserved by their disciples; and were not much disturbed even by the controversy of the sixteenth century. Accordingly we find them for the most part reproduced in the writings of Böhme, which contain however some expansions of ideas that are apparently original. Little can be said here of his biography; but in passing it is well to notice a current error, which describes him as extremely poor, and almost destitute of education. His parents were peasants of the better class. He could read and criticize some books called abstruse. His friends were mostly men of respectable position. During his travels he heard much of the religious controversies of the times, especially those between Lutherans and the men called "Crypto-Calvinists." His enlightenment, he tells us, was preceded by a time of doubt induced by endeavours to solve hard questions respecting Providence. His first book—printed in 1612—contained many passages that gave great offence. In obedience to his pastor, Böhme abstained from writing on theology, and remained silent for about seven years. He was however encouraged by his friends to begin writing again in 1619, and produced after that time several mystic works, including a tract, "On the Threefold Life of Man;" Replies to "Forty Questions respecting the Soul;" a tract entitled "De Signatura Rerum;" and the "Mysterium Magnum." During the last four or five years of his life (1619-24) he was chiefly

supported by the sale of his books, and by gifts from several friends who believed in his teaching.

There are found in Böhme's writings some remarkably imaginative descriptions and illustrations. These chiefly attracted the attention of dreamy and poetical men in the days of the "Romantic School." Here and there occur passages that may be called clear and popular—for example the following:—

"As the earth expresses her virtues in many flowers, so the Creator displays his wisdom and marvellous works in his children. If as lowly children we could dwell together, each rejoicing in the gifts and talents possessed by others, who would condemn us?—Who condemns the birds in the wood when they all praise their Lord, while each in its own mode sings as its nature bids?—Does Divine Wisdom condemn them because they do not all sing in unison? No; for all their voices are gifts from One in whose presence they are all singing. The men who, with regard to their knowledge, quarrel and despise one another, are inferior, in this respect, to the birds of the wood and to other wild creatures. Such men are more useless than the quiet flowers of the field, which allow their Creator's wisdom and power to display themselves freely. Such men are worse than thorns and thistles among fair flowers; for thorns and thistles can, at least, be still."

The most remarkable passages in Böhme are those in which he repeats again and again his doctrine respecting "the fall of man"—as in the following:—

"There is an inner light, not extinguished, but overcast as with a cloud in the soul of man. His darkness is the result of his self-will, which contains in itself the essence of evil. Its most common forms of manifestation are pride, greed, envy, and hate. Man is a union of body and soul. Moral evil, therefore, expresses itself in natural defects. Man's sin has debased not only his own physical nature, but that of the world that belongs to him. When man becomes disobedient to God, the earth becomes disobedient to man." [Böhme calls self-will, especially in the form of pride, Lucifer, and writes sometimes as if using personification; but, at other times he speaks

of Lucifer as the first transgressor.] "The fall which men deplore is the result of perverted freedom. The greatest of all the gifts bestowed by the Creator on his creatures is freedom, and its right use is a free obedience rendered to the will of the Giver. But self-will has made a perversion of the highest possible good. As the root of a thorn makes only thorns out of the light and warmth by which roses also bloom, so self-will has converted good into evil. But evil is not to prevail. It must be finally transmuted into good; meanwhile it calls forth the energies of Divine Love. Man's deepest misery calls forth the highest expression of mercy. A second Adam appears and reverses the process instituted by the first. The first asserts his own will and forfeits Paradise; the second resigns his will, his soul, his life; and so returns into Paradise, leading with him all who will follow him."

What is the idea that, as a first principle, belongs to both mystic and speculative views of religion? (pp. 390-91). The reply must here be simply *historical*. Any attempt made toward exposition would lead down to the very depths of metaphysics.

. "Facilis descensus Averno;
Sed revocare gradum, superasque evadere ad auras,
Hoc opus, hic labor est."

Virg. Æn. vi., 126-9.

So abhorrent from everything like mystic thought is the genius of English literature, that our language does not possess the words strictly required in order to translate the passages best showing the main concordance of Böhme and Hegel. Accordingly, all mention of them might be simply omitted here; and we might pass on swiftly to notice the more popular details of the controversy raised by David Strauss. But such an omission would make everything that might follow *historically false*; for this later controversy was in fact developed out of the teaching of Hegel, so far as it was understood by Strauss. It is now indeed determined by all competent critics* that his interpretation of Hegel's teaching was utterly erroneous. Still the fact

* Dorner; "Gesch. der prot. Theologie" (1867), pp. 787-91. Pfleiderer; "Religionsphilosophie" (1878), pp. 593, 673.

remains, that the "theory of myths," as at first proposed by Strauss, arose out of his study of speculative philosophy, of which, therefore, some initiatory account must here be given. The subject is very ungrateful; and for the most part our analysis of it will be deferred to the next following chapter; but here we must notice briefly how the teaching of Schelling and Hegel made a great apparent alteration in the relations existing between philosophy and religion. The sweeping negations of deism were no longer re-echoed; but it was now granted, at least, that there was in the Christian religion something to be respected. Its leading ideas were not defined as self-contradictory; but even those called mysteries—the ideas of mediation, and atonement—were accepted as religious expressions of eternal truths. These and other supposed conciliations of philosophy and religion, all rested on the basis of a first metaphysical idea, of which the following brief (and perhaps unsatisfactory) expression must here suffice:—Life—we are told—natural, ethical or intellectual—consists not in any abstract principle; but has a process of which the form is triune. Nothing definable as abstract—as existing in a dead identity, and having in itself no energy of self-distinction—can have any true existence; the thought of such a thing is but a definition formed by our understanding. Life develops itself by means of oppositions; and the relations of opposite expressions of one truth are *not merely negative*, but have growth or development of truth for their result.* Definition is not negation. The finite is at once defined by and united with the infinite. They are not merely identified, and are not separated. Obviously, if this be granted, the chief negations of deistic logic at once lose their force. No such negations—we are told—belong to speculative philosophy; for this—says Hegel—refutes the proposition so often accepted as an axiom:—"Omnis determinatio est negatio."

Accordingly, it was now said, that a change of meta-

* Hegel; "Encyclop. d. phil. Wissens." (3te Ausg. 1830), §§ 22-4, and § 82.

physical principles had led to a corresponding change in the relations of philosophy and religion; and that this change was observable when we looked, on one side, to that which had been denied by deistic logic; or on the other side, to that which speculative philosophy now asserted.

On the negative side, the new philosophy did not define faith as bounded by the understanding. It was not declared now that every tenet not yet reduced to a clear, intelligible form must therefore be denounced as absurd. The man of honest intention whose faith was a "religion of the heart" was now recognized once more as a brother; though he might have no tendency to reflexion, and might perhaps fall into logical error—or fail to show a strict sequence of conclusions—when he endeavoured to give a reason for the faith that was within him. The "rights" of intuition and immediate ethical feeling—these rights so long suppressed under the tyranny of logic—were now allowed to be as valid as the conclusions of reasoning processes. These were first principles, held by many thoughtful men who lived in the time of Steffens and Schelling. They earnestly longed for some restoration of faith. They did not hold that a divine revelation is impossible.

On the positive side, the new philosophy accepted as facts of experience some of the truths that for ages had been believed, though popular philosophy had classed them with errors now exploded. The intellectual horizon was enlarged, as the apparent horizon is changed when we climb out of a low and narrow dale to the top of a mountain. "What a tiny speck!" says the traveller, when he looks down on the hamlet where he has passed the night. So Schelling spoke of rationalism, when he defined it as a system on every side too small.

Secularism, or practical atheism—Buddhism—Christianity—each of these, when compared with other assertions of general and ethical principles, may be called great or comprehensive. The first is a negation of all religions. Buddhism—primitive, not popular—is clear in its teaching

as to man's way of salvation. He must die—not in the superficial sense understood by those for whom ceasing to breathe is dying; but so that the will must die first, resigning at once the pleasures, and with them the sorrows of life. This is the teaching of which our modern name is "Pessimism." Nothing is said here of its truth or its untruth: it is noticed only as being a comprehensive idea, and practically clear as a general rule of life. Of secularism—though mostly negative—the same may be said. It has nothing to say of salvation; but tells us merely that man, by the use of his reason, must improve his condition in this life.

Christianity cannot be made clear in this negative way. It is a doctrine that, in the first place, admits as real the facts of history—the good and the bad; the hopeful, and those that seem hopeless. Christianity is at once severe and kind, truthful and moderate; but its chief practical trait is this—that it brings to man a hope of reconciliation with Heaven, while it recognizes the fact that his nature is dualistic. He has heaven or hell in himself. It is vain to tell him to get rid of "gloomy mysteries." Let religion be abolished; but here the mysteries still remain—in his own nature. "Suppressio veri"—says Schelling—is not enlightenment; but *vice versa* the so-called "enlightenment" of the age now passing away is a "suppressio veri."

CHAPTER XVI.

SCHELLING.—HEGEL.

It is here that our limitations, already defined (pp. 9-12) must be most strictly observed. There is but little that can be said here of speculative philosophy, save that which relates to religion; and limitation must be made still closer; little can be said, save that which relates to one doctrine—the central tenet of the Christian Religion—that in which lives the uniting energy without which the whole system of our belief falls to ruin. This is a truth now accepted as an axiom, alike by the millions of men classed with orthodox Christians and by many of the most intelligent among the anti-christian writers of modern times (pp. 11-12). The latter know well that to gain their end—to destroy religion—it is not required that they should refute specially every doctrine called Christian; “let the centre be attacked”—this, as we have seen (p. 12), is the leading idea, ever held in view throughout the whole of their warfare against religion.

“But how”—an English reader may naturally inquire—“how should philosophy have anything to say respecting that one central tenet?”—For Catholics it is one long ago defined by the Church as orthodox; while Protestants, in large numbers, have accepted it as a doctrine founded on a right interpretation of Holy Scripture. The scriptural grounds for its assertion have been attacked by many critics since Semler’s time; and hence the Christian faith of large numbers of men has been destroyed. The question then is—in the first place, and for Protestants—one respecting the validity of certain historical accounts; and the answer must

be founded on historical research. But what can philosophy, or any doctrine of general ideas, have to say respecting a purely historical question—a question of facts? At the utmost it can only say that such facts are possible.

This is a summary of the chief objections urged against philosophical views of religious questions. Not only those biblical critics who are classed with rationalists, but also men most various in their opinions—materialists, agnostics, theologians of almost all confessions, including both the orthodox and the latitudinarian—have agreed in reprobation of attempts made by speculative philosophy to show its accordance with tenets called Christian. This censure has in the present century fallen most heavily on the writings of two men—Schelling and Hegel. On one side their general tendency has been described as “pantheistic;” on the other, it has been said that they contributed largely—especially in 1820-45—toward such restoration of religious belief as took place in the course of that time. Into this controversy we shall not enter; but shall chiefly pay attention to facts or results, and especially to those having some relation to Christology.

The unbelief of the eighteenth century was not at first founded on any biblical criticism, however destructive, but was in its way philosophical. This fact has been made clear in the accounts already given of English deism (pp. 13-31) and German “popular philosophy” (pp. 55-63). Deism, like “popular philosophy,” is founded on one general principle of abstract unity in God, and of absolute separation between the two natures, divine and human. The deist sees everywhere one and the same eternal separation, as first existing between God and man, and then as reflected in such antitheses as the infinite and the finite—matter and spirit—mind and nature—revelation and science—faith and reason. Everywhere, in deistic theory, we begin and end with separation.

The general aim of both Schelling and Hegel was to assert as their first principle that the separation made

between faith and reason was not final; but should be viewed as a formal and temporary opposition. Opposition, said Schelling, does exist, but only in order that union may make manifest its energy. His earliest theory was an asserted concordance of nature and the mind. His teaching had more or less of a mystic character after 1809. In proportion as it became more ethical, it was made more approximative toward the orthodox doctrine of Christology. In his latest course of lectures (1841) he maintained, that ethical principles—known as sentiments, as rules of practice, and as general ideas—must be viewed as expressions of a divine power, pervading the whole course of history. The ideas leading men to Christ are—he says—manifestations of his presence—the presence of his own Spirit, pervading history, and leading mankind into union with God.

Of Hegel's religious teaching it is not so easy to write at once briefly and truly; for there are three distinct interpretations of his doctrine. The first, as held by Strauss, is now mostly rejected as incorrect; the second is the doctrine expounded by Pfleiderer, in his "*Religions-philosophie*" (1878); and the third asserts on the whole a concordance between Hegel's own doctrine and that recognized as orthodox. In order to avoid controversy, our further notices of both Schelling and Hegel must be chiefly historical.

FRIEDRICH WILHELM JOSEPH VON SCHELLING, born at Leonberg in 1775, was in early life a student at Tübingen, and afterwards went to Jena, where he was for some time associated with Fichte, whose earlier philosophy he had studied. He was especially dissatisfied with its views of nature; and was soon led to inquire how he might find a first principle on which should be founded a doctrine at once ideal and real—the "*Philosophy of Nature*," of which he wrote some outlines in 1797. Nature and the mind, are, he said, in their essence one. In nature ideas are divided and become external and visible; in the mind they return to union. The processes of nature are so many ascending steps by which the mind escapes from its subjec-

tion to external laws, recognizes itself, and becomes conscious of its own freedom. Every phenomenon in nature is the incorporation of an idea. These doctrines, vaguely conceived by imaginative young men, led them to write as interpreters of a meaning concealed and revealed by the symbols of the external world. They gave, in their romantic stories, sentiments and thoughts to landscapes, heard tales of wonder told by running brooks and waterfalls, and described, or implied, reciprocal relations existing between man and the surrounding world. The thought thus expressed in fantastic forms seems new and bold, when pronounced as philosophy and written in prose; but in poetry it is far older than the time of Schelling. It has been implied in the mythology and poetry of all nations; and has been described by Steffens—one of Schelling's earliest disciples—as a truth that can never be demonstrated, but will always be believed. Reduced to a concise form of expression, or put in abstract terms, Schelling's principle is equivalent to the assertion that truth is at once subjective and objective.

About the time when the "Philosophy of Nature" appeared, Coleridge and Wordsworth were travelling in Germany. The former was especially attracted by the new theory; or rather by its leading idea, which he was well able to develop. He could see at a glance, that it might lead to deeper studies of history and mythology, but especially to more comprehensive views of ethics and religion. Indirectly his study of a philosophy that at first was called "pantheistic" led him on to more expanded views of Christianity. Meanwhile he often talked of poetry and philosophy with his friend Wordsworth, who could admire Schelling's theory as viewed on its poetical side. Some of the finest meditative passages in Wordsworth's poetry are echoes of thoughts belonging partly to Schelling, and partly to Coleridge; for the latter was more than an excellent interpreter. Wordsworth, it may be added, was never led beyond the poetry of speculative philosophy. It

caused no disturbance of his religious belief. Of the pantheism ascribed to some passages in his poetry he was unconscious. His creed was that commonly accepted in the Anglican Church.

Schelling's early theory—greatly modified from time to time—led him at last to the new doctrine promulgated after 1841. The general tendency of his later teaching was toward some reconciliation of philosophy with positive religion. In his early theory he asserted the identity of mind and nature. By several transitions—found in his writings, "On the Soul of the World" (1798), the "System of Transcendental Idealism" (1800), "Bruno" (1802), and the "Lectures on the Method of Academical Study" (1803)—he advanced to the doctrine of mysticism contained in his work "On the Freedom of Man" (1809). His latest teaching had a tendency to assert itself as Monotheism, in opposition to Pantheism, and to refer the existence of moral evil to its cause in a perversion of man's will. With this leading idea was united a theory showing how all mythologies were to be viewed as inquiries leading on to the acceptance of a final revelation.

After leaving Jena (in 1808) Schelling gained the appointment of secretary to the Academy at Munich, where he was elected professor of philosophy in 1827. He was called, in 1841, to Berlin, where he delivered a course of lectures on "The Philosophy of Revelation."* Among his hearers many complained that his principles were theosophic, and could afford no satisfaction to earnest inquirers. After this time his teaching was mostly neglected, or was denounced as illiberal and retrogressive. The opposition he had to encounter was bitter, and was sometimes too much like persecution. He died in 1854.

Of all that has been said of German mysticism and dreamery, the greater part relates to the speculative literature of Schelling's time. For English readers it is not

* "Philosophie der Offenbarung;" herausg. von Fr. Schelling. 2 Bände, 1858.

easy to see how his philosophy can be connected with the simple question—Is Christianity historically true? It is not directly so connected; for history must of course answer a purely historical question. But philosophy is, says Schelling, accordant with ethics, as also with the history of religions; and serves to strengthen their evidence. Let it be conceded that one Supreme Power rules in our conscience, in nature, and in history—the concession must give additional force to the ethical argument. This is based on the fact that man requires the aid of revelation. Ethical feeling tells us that a revealed religion is desirable; and philosophy says, at least, that it is possible. Still there remains the question, “has a revelation taken place in the course of the world’s history?” There has taken place, says Schelling, a gradual revelation. Obviously the strength of this assertion rests in the principle always assumed as true. The evidence afforded by history must, he says, be accordant with that of our ethical conscience. Both are to be regarded as based on one authority. Since, however, Christianity has had a distinct historical beginning, the philosopher is compelled by his own principle to class *all* religions under the idea of revelation. This is the chief point to be noticed here. First, however, some brief account may be given of his earlier teaching, and of the mysticism developed in his writings after 1809.

The time when Schelling first made himself a name was especially a time of paradoxes. Philosophers maintained as true some Christian tenets but rarely asserted, even by theologians then called orthodox. For example, Hegel held, he said, as substantially true the doctrine of the Trinity, though it was here and there asserted but vaguely in his earlier writings. Schelling, in his lectures published in 1803, endeavoured to make some approximation toward the doctrine of the Incarnation. It must not, however, be supposed that his teaching, at this time, was on the whole accordant with the doctrines still called orthodox in the Lutheran Church. On the contrary, his estimate of the

value of scriptural evidences, in their support of Christian tenets, was unsatisfactory in the extreme; especially as regarded from a Lutheran point of view. The boldest trait in the course of lectures here referred to was their opposition to a theory of evolution once known as Lamarck's, and but little noticed at the time when Schelling published his "Lectures on Method in Academical Studies."* Looking back to the primitive condition of mankind, he then spoke—almost as boldly as Hesiod—of that golden age when lived a race of good, wise and happy men who, when their generation had disappeared, were worshipped as gods and heroes. That man, in his primitive condition, was but one of many simian animals, climbing about in forests; that he lifted himself up from instinct to consciousness; from animal life to rational humanity—this, says Schelling, is impossible. Men inspired by God and endowed with reason lived in the earliest time. In no other way can we account for the beginning and the spread of religion and culture. That culture may die away and disappear in certain nations, is a fact of which history makes us sure; that it may, as it were *ab ovo et de novo*, develop itself out of the conditions of animal existence—this we do not know. The first estate of man was one of culture, founded on religion. That was the alpha of humanity; and a return of that golden age will be the omega. This is the especial point in Schelling's teaching that has been almost unanimously rejected by scientific men in our own day.

Schelling's bold speculation won for him disciples, and made enemies. The time was especially one of restless intellectual inquiry; and heretical opinions—afterwards condemned—were here and there spread among Catholics. No creed or theory less comprehensive than pantheism could serve for the bolder spirits of the age. Others—among them Steffens in his earlier years—followed Schelling for a time through his "philosophy of nature;" but would

* "Vorlesungen über die Methode des akademischen Studiums;" 1803.

not follow him in his later teaching. Several wandered far into mysticism of a dreamy and visionary kind. Controversies followed; and men who at heart were led by one tendency were sometimes opposed to each other, and were bitter foes. When a skirmish takes place in a dense wood, the man who is readiest to fire may as likely hit a friend as a foe. Errors of this sort often occurred. There was awakened an earnest spirit of inquiry, not always associated with patience and sobriety; and in too many instances, men who had rebelled against the tyranny of logic allowed themselves now to be led far astray by their own imagination. Religion—so-called—had been made a system so hard, cold and drily intellectual that—as some men boldly said—almost any form of heathen religion, or superstition—if poetical—might be preferable. Schelling had some skill in controversy; and often invited attacks. One of the accusations preferred against him was the alleged fact, that he had been studying the writings of Christian mystics. “I have not read them”—he replied—“but for this I claim no credit; it has been a case of neglect, and I shall now betake myself to the study of those writings.” The whole of his reply on this occasion is worth notice; and one short passage may be quoted here:—

“We treat with respect the practical piety of men who avoid speculative questions relating to religious faith. They endeavour to obey God’s commands; and in this, they believe, consists the substance of religion. We honour the simple faith of these men. But the case is altered when there steps forward a moral philosopher; one who would make us believe that morals should now take the place of religion. He knows, in fact, no more than has been said already by modest men of practical piety; but he wishes to make it sound like something more. He therefore goes on to speak of ‘moral order,’ of which the Infinite—he tells us—is but a personification; and next he informs us, that if we believe in anything more than this morality made absolute, we are superstitious.—How do men of common sense reply to such a preacher?—‘Hold your tongue, and come down,’ they say; ‘for though you make a loud sound, even like a noise of many waters, you know as little of the matter as we ourselves.’”

Schelling’s general estimate of rationalism—including all

the logic that he called "negative"—has been briefly given. He defined it as a mere "*suppressio veri*." His promise, that he would study the writings of men called mystics, was soon fulfilled; and the result was seen in the new religious tendency of his speculative philosophy. At the same time, his ethical teaching was made more directly contrary to the commonplace morality of deism and popular philosophy. His first endeavour now was to claim for intuition, instinct, and sentiment on one side, and for history and religion on the other, some share of the attention that had long been too exclusively bestowed on subjective reasoning and system-making. It was chiefly in 1809 that his teaching assumed a distinctly religious character. The ideas of man's fall and his need of a divine revelation were afterwards made more prominent; and it was asserted that history and philosophy, without the presence of religion, could say nothing to shed light over the mysteries of human life (pp. 229, 245). The theory of religion was now made more and more mystical. Revelation was defined as a light dawning slowly and gleaming fitfully through many religions; at last shining out clearly. Critics complained that Schelling was now wandering far away from daylight. On the other hand he replied, that the light of rationalism was artificial; and that its doctrines, though often called clear, were in fact obscure. In order to come forth at last into the light of day, said he, we must venture at first to descend into the gloom of deep research. We must find our way through a valley where shadows are interspersed among mysterious lights. These and similar observations now lead on to dark questionings respecting man's original freedom; and these lead us on further to a theory of evil—first possible, and permitted; then made real by wilful transgression and rebellion. Schelling leads us down into abysses of mystic speculation while he is describing the consequences of man's fall. His spiritual powers have been perverted by an original sin, but feebly indicated by our word "pride," as commonly understood. For "pride" is here to be understood in an

extreme sense, as denoting self-assertion, wilfulness, and "hardness of heart," refusing to acknowledge and feel dependence on the wisdom, goodness and love of the Creator. The doctrine here has obviously been derived chiefly from studies of Böhme's theosophy; and must be described as almost Manichean. It is added, that the utmost evil that creatures endowed with freedom can perpetrate was originally allowed to be possible, in order that Divine Love—more and more made manifest throughout the whole course of spiritual warfare—might appear as consistent with the development of freedom, and in the end might have its highest possible triumph. Schelling contends, that without "a possibility of evil" neither freedom nor personality could exist in finite beings.

That which asserts itself in opposition to Divine Love cannot create anything; cannot expand or develop any power created, or bestowed on creatures; it is but negation, or perversion and deterioration of a power originally good and still indestructible. The sins of mankind are so many perversions of faculties all good at first, and all capable of restoration—but not by any strength merely human.

This is a point to be especially noticed in Schelling's religious philosophy. His teaching here has been called "mystic," "theosophic," and "hopelessly obscure;" and yet he maintains that it is accordant with the history of mankind, and with the history of ancient religions. They were all, he says, but so many guesses and inquiries, leading on toward one revelation. They were shadows; but they indicated the existence of a substance. They all expressed—though more or less obscurely—a divine idea. They implied, or formally confessed, the fall of man, and his consequent ethical separation from God. Lastly, they all confessed a need of some mediation, by which union with God might be restored.

Enough has been told to show how far Schelling has led us away from the position held by the deists of the eighteenth century. As we have seen (pp. 38-40) they

maintained that a divine revelation, such as Christians believe in, has not been granted; and further, that it has never been needed. To change the form of their negations—they asserted the actual, moral, and intellectual independence of man; though they always supposed an original dependence on his Creator, and a constant physical dependence on the world of nature. After all that has been told of Schelling's first principle—that truth is at once subjective and objective—it will be obvious that he could not accept the chief dogma of deism. To say nothing here of Christianity—he could not speak contemptuously of Judaism. Its tenets had been accepted as the faith of millions; had been for centuries associated with habits of virtue and piety; had been united with the brightest hopes and the kindest affections of a people whose religion was their life. Schelling was bound by his own principle to treat their religion, not merely as a great fact, but as one containing substantial and divine truth. But this was not all that he was compelled to admit as true in the various religions of the world, ancient and modern. To show the result to which he was inevitably led by his principle, it may be imagined here, that some attempt is made to refute him by means of a “*reductio ad absurdum*.”—You must recognize then, says the formal logician, some truth in the worship of Apollo and Diana. You must find also some good reason for the reverence paid, in the oldest times, to benevolent demons or genii, such for example as are named by Hesiod:—

*ἀντὰρ ἐπειδὴ τοῦτο γένος κατὰ γαῖα κάλυψεν,
τοὶ μὲν δαίμονές εἰσι, Διὸς μεγάλου διὰ βουλὰς,
ἑσθλοὶ ἐπιχθόνιοι, φύλακες θνητῶν ἀνθρώπων*

*πλουτοδόται· καὶ τοῦτο γέρας βασιλῆϊον ἔσχον.**

* “When in the grave this race of men was laid,
Soon was a world of holy demons made,

To such objections as are here supposed the philosopher's reply would be simply this:—I do recognize truth in that worship; and I see some good reason for that reverence. Both were rooted in one idea—an idea of union with God. In connection with this idea there is expressed in all religions a consciousness of sin. Under one form or another, the truth is confessed, that the energies of man's soul and mind have fallen into disorder, and have lost their sense of union with their Creator. The tendencies that were organic have been made chaotic. Yet light shines through the chaos, and through all its warring elements there is felt—above all in the heart of man—the presence of an all-pervading, attracting power, drawing the world of created minds back to their Creator. Hence, in the midst of all their disorder and perversity of will, we recognize the presence of one divine idea making itself more and more manifest amid all our various and defective forms of religion. Through all their diverse and sometimes contradictory traditions and tenets, there runs one clue, by which mankind will ultimately be led home to God.

This view of heathen religions was opposed to the doctrine of some Christian apologists. Their way of defending their own faith was to treat as utterly erroneous every Pagan tradition. On the contrary, Schelling held that a tendency toward a true belief had more or less been present amid the errors of heathenism. Men, he said, believed and worshipped ignorantly; yet were led on toward the truth. There was more or less of a true ethical tendency associated with their religious traditions and ritualistic institutions. A light

Aërial spirits, by great Jove design'd
To be on earth the guardians of mankind.

They can reward with glory or with gold;
A power they by divine commission hold."

Hesiod, "Opp. et Dies," 121-6.

—*Cooke's Translation.*

which they could not comprehend shone through their darkness.

This theory was held as not inconsistent with a belief that the religion of Israel served especially as a preparation for the coming of Christ, who was "the desire of all nations." For here, in Judaism, a consciousness of sin was especially awakened by the law, which was "holy." There, in the Gentile world, a poetic mythology was to a large extent corrupt in its ethical purport; the sense of man's sinfulness was mostly superficial; and the idea of union or reconciliation with God was therefore shallow. For want of depth, there was a want of height. Ideas of mediation—mostly imaginative rather than religious—did, however, exist in heathenism; and indirectly foreshadowed the coming of Christ. They were signs, says Schelling, of his pre-existential and spiritual presence; and were not altogether neglected by the more religious men of the ancient world. These ideas were accepted by several Protestant theologians of the higher rank—for example by Tholuck—and served to enlarge their views of prophecy and its fulfilments. A new light was cast on the history of both heathenism and Judaism. Students of the prophetic scriptures now learned that not only a few texts, but the whole of the Old Testament, might be viewed as a prophecy of the Advent.

Here we must leave the teaching of Schelling, and turn to a very difficult task—to give some account of the "Hegelian School." It has been the especial calamity of Germany in the present century, that the intellectual and analytical element in education has been made predominant to an extent wilful, tyrannical and destructive. The historical, the ethical, the religious, and (we would add) the poetic and "sentimental"—all these forms, in which truth makes itself known, felt, and operative in the world, have been oppressed, trodden down, and in fact annihilated, in order that some form of logic or another may, in a few years, make itself absolute. And what has been the result?—Desolation, without the quietude that,

one might suppose, should belong to a desert. Clearness of insight is the very last thing to be attained, even by the most reverent and faithful of students; and it will never be obtained by negation. It was especially a want of clearness that was the charge preferred against Schelling, when his teaching was made more positive; when he was led to treat more and more reverently the results of historical, ethical and religious inquiry. That inquiry led him to a profound belief in two facts:—the world, including especially the mind and will of mankind, has been set in opposition to divine love; and by a new manifestation of this love a mediatorial process has been instituted. Without these admissions—he said—history, religion, and philosophy were but dead subjects for dissection; and this dissection could have for him no interest—no hope of any good result.

In order to place together our notices of Schelling's philosophy—the earlier and the later—the order of time has been neglected. During almost twenty years—but especially in 1818-31—his teaching was for the most part disregarded; and men especially complained of his "want of logic." This reminds one of a time remembered by the few *old* Oxonians still living. Soon after the passing of our Reform Bill, when the University of Oxford was a centre of controversy, political and ecclesiastical, it was said of a certain room there, that its atmosphere was "redolent of logic." With more justice might the same be said of the Berlin University, for some few years before that time. There a morbid tendency to excess in the culture (or *cultus*) of the mere intellect has long existed; but this was never so much the case as in the years 1820-35; or say more definitely in the five years 1827-31. There was then on all sides too much haste and impetuosity in grappling with the hardest problems of reason and faith. Schelling, living in comparative obscurity, predicted that the result would be negative; and Goethe who, in his old age, heard now and then something of discussion at Berlin, suggested that religion was a subject to be approached in another way (p. 316). It was

Hegel's logic that was now making itself more and more predominant. For a time—say in 1820-26—the teaching of Schleiermacher held what might be called a rival position; but in 1827-31 the said logic made itself almost “absolute,” in the University of Berlin. For a time it was viewed as a study leading to conclusions of a conservative character, as regards both religion and politics. But after 1831 its negative results were made apparent.

How far did these “negative results” truly belong to Hegel, or fairly represent his meaning and intention? This is a question that here will still be left open; since we write for the most part historically, and have to show chiefly how that logic was so understood as to afford a basis for the hypotheses maintained by Strauss and others, who all supposed that they were writing more or less in accordance with the conclusions of that logic. It had shown, as they believed, how the chief ideas represented in nature, in history, and in the traditions and doctrines of religion—especially the Christian religion—were in truth ideas “immanent,” or always abiding in the mind of man; just as life was supposed to be a force always immanent in nature, and ready to start forth as it were, and make itself manifest wherever the conditions favourable to its self-development were present and connected.

A little consideration will suffice to show how this general idea could be so understood as to afford apparently some basis for either of the two distinct theories of Strauss and Baur, respecting the origin of the Christian faith and its chief tenets. It was granted on all sides that this faith, appearing in the first century, was largely “developed” near the close of the second. How?—By the aid of “myths” said Strauss; while Baur had far more to say of “ideas developed by means of opposition.” Both, however, had one common assumption as their ground. Each supposed that the ideas developed, whether by means of poetry or by controversy, were there already—“immanent” in the minds of men. The time 1-150 was eminently well adapted

for their development—so said Baur in his writings on early Church history—and consequently no supernatural revelation was required. This may be viewed as the “speculative” or “philosophical” ground of the new controversy against historical Christian faith. The chief novelty of the attack—begun in 1835 and ended in 1873—consisted in the supposed fact that unbelief had now a basis in the “philosophy of religion,” and might indeed be viewed as a “speculative-religious” argument against historical religion. In passing it may be added, that the supposed basis of 1835 was utterly rejected by Strauss in 1873; but this is not the point to be chiefly noticed here. The new controversial movement did in fact proceed out of the “Hegelian School” of 1827-35, of which, therefore, some account must be given. This, however, will be for the most part historical; and will chiefly have the aim of making clear the fact, that there have existed—so far as regards religion—three distinct interpretations of the doctrine taught in that school. The first, as held by Strauss, is clearly erroneous; and is in substance an abolition of all religion. The second interpretation has been so widely accepted by a large number of intelligent men—including, for example, Biedermann and Pfleiderer—that it must now be viewed as the established form of Hegelian religious doctrine. The third interpretation—a subordinate matter—will be noticed in another place. Here first must be given some general account of the school and its doctrines; and then must be more distinctly noticed the following fact, which we have chiefly to consider:—Whether it was brought to pass by a false or by a true interpretation of the said logic, we do not care to inquire; it remains true, however, that the main result of Hegelian logic was certainly one much like that which Schelling clearly predicted; especially when he said, “it will be negative.” Throughout his later lectures and writings his chief aim was to keep logic in its own subservient place, and first of all to direct attention toward ethical and historical studies, as affording the surest

guidance toward religious faith. He assumed as granted a first principle held in common by all men and everywhere:—The Supreme Being makes himself known in three ways, and in various degrees:—in *nature*, as displayed all around us; in our *conscience*, and in universal *history*, of which the result is a general conscience of humanity. *This general conscience demands such a revelation as is granted to us in Christ.* Such was the conclusion to which Schelling was leading young men, at the time when their attention was called away by the higher pretensions of the Hegelian School.

Here must be noticed briefly the circumstances leading to the temporary dominion of this school. The closest possible union of studies—physical, ethical, philosophical, and religious—this was the common aim of philosophy after the time when Kant had drawn his hard boundary-line between that which we can know and that which we cannot know. To say nothing more of the dualism in which his teaching ended (p. 179), he left a division strongly marked between the intellect and the moral conscience. Fichte asserted that philosophy must be a deduction from one principle. Schelling taught that the basis of philosophy must be found, not in reasoning, but in a primary intuition of union ever existing between mind and its object. This union in apparent disunion, Hegel asserted, must be developed by a logical method. If a thought is deep and true, he says, its capability of expansion will be as great as its depth; it can survive its encounters with all possible contradictions, and will make all oppositions serve as a means of its own development. These and similar assertions, made in the preface to the “Phenomenology of the Mind” (1807), indicated the work which the writer afterwards endeavoured to perform in his “Logic” (1812) and in his “Encyclopædia” (1817). Hegel’s was a most laborious effort to find union in all the departments of knowledge. He endeavoured to unite metaphysics with a logical method, by which all the categories should be united in one sequence,

GEORG WILHELM FRIEDRICH HEGEL was born at Stuttgart, August 27, 1770. After receiving his early training at the Gymnasium in his native place, he went to study theology at the University of Tübingen, where he became acquainted with Schelling. Soon after leaving Tübingen, he was engaged as a private tutor at Berne. After leaving Berne, in 1796, he lived as a private tutor in Frankfort (1797-1800), and during his stay there was an industrious student. He wrote during those years, in very simple and dispassionate language, a "Life of Christ." In this narrative there is no trace of irreverence or old-fashioned rationalism; but it is noticeable that not a word is said of any miraculous events. He went to Jena in 1801. There he again met Schelling, whom he assisted in editing "A Critical Journal of Philosophy" (1802-3), in which he published his abstruse treatise on "Faith and Science." He gained a professorship at Jena in 1805, and, in the course of that and the following year, wrote his treatise, the "Phenomenology of the Mind." In the preface to this work he first clearly expressed his dissent from Schelling's discursive style of teaching, and indicated his own dialectic method, which was afterwards fully developed in his "Logic." He was finishing the "Phenomenology" (1806) when the thunders of French artillery at Jena disturbed his philosophic speculations, and drove him away to find some scanty means of subsistence at Bamberg, where, for a short time, he edited a political journal. He soon, however, gained (1808) a better appointment as rector of the Gymnasium at Nürnberg. It is noticeable that in this position he was strict in demanding attention to ethical and religious studies. In 1816 he was appointed professor of philosophy at Heidelberg, where he published (1817) his smaller "Encyclopædia," containing a summary of his whole system of teaching, but without the explanatory notes which were appended to it in a later edition. He remained in comparative obscurity until 1818, when he was invited to take the chair of philosophy at the University of Berlin.

In his opening address, delivered in October, 1818, he spoke of the University of Berlin as destined to be recognized as the middle-point of the civilized world, or as the centre of intellectual culture; and he asserted, on the same occasion, that religion and philosophy must be united with a true political progress. Though he maintained that the development of freedom was the goal of all history, his views of progress were so far moderate that he was generally regarded as a conservative in politics. He thus gained the support of the Altenstein ministry. His treatise on the "Philosophy of Rights" was published in 1821. He advocated a representation of the people, freedom of the press, trial by jury, and the administrative independence of civic corporations. His assertion that political government must always require the aid of religion has already been noticed (pp. 172-3). He defended the union of Church and State as established in Prussia. His views respecting that union were Erastian. In his later years his conservative tendencies were strengthened by the occurrence of the July Revolution, and by the discussion excited by the English Reform Bill. He wrote in 1830 an article on this proposed measure. While adhering to his judgment in favour of the English form of government, he expressed fears respecting the results of political changes based on theory. He contended that freedom in England had long consisted in a supposed balance of interests; and that the introduction of theoretical principles could not be safe without a great improvement in education.

The later days of Hegel's life were embittered by the philosophical and theological disputes to which he refers in the preface to the third edition of his "Encyclopædia." In 1830 he was appointed Rector of the University of Berlin. He was preparing a new edition of his "Logic" (1831), when his labours were ended by a sudden attack of the epidemic—Asiatic cholera—then prevalent. He was soon prostrated by the disease, and died November 14, 1831. A few years after his death, his writings—including, besides

those already named, Lectures on the "Philosophy of Religion," on the "History of Philosophy," on the "Philosophy of History," and on "Æsthetics"—were collected and edited by a number of his friends and disciples.

Hegel's first principle asserts that truth, or union, always has opposition for its means of development; consequently nothing that he calls true can be fairly expressed in the form of any one or simple proposition. There are always three propositions required. For example, in the first general idea of religion—Man, in his first state of consciousness, is a creature whose natural life is controlled by his own will. But, secondly, he is capable of knowing and feeling the presence of a universal will, to which his own ought to be subordinated. Thirdly, between these two facts of conscience some union more or less satisfactory takes place; and this union is religion. More briefly, religion may now be defined as man's conscious submission to God's will; but, he says, "the three moments"—so he calls the three propositions—are still here; implied though not formally expressed. He then goes on to show that union does not result out of mere negation. Thus—in the example given—man's will, he says, is not destroyed, but is subordinated. The result therefore is a union at once divine and human. The "logic"—so-called, but in fact a system of abstruse metaphysics—has for its first principle or immanent moving force the idea of union as ever subsisting under the forms of opposition; and the aim of the whole process is nothing less than a refutation of the proposition:—"Omnis determinatio est negatio." This is the shortest description we can give in terms that may be called intelligible.

Obviously an attempt to make clearer or even popular the initiatory notion here indicated, would only be tedious and useless. The "logic," as employed to develop religious ideas, has served to excite long and abstruse controversies; and it is granted—even by its most diligent students, that it has been unhappily placed as the beginning of a system.

Hegel's metaphysics have served to lead many intelligent men into labyrinths of doubt, and far away from intellectual daylight. At the same time it has been often noticed, that his writings contain some remarkably comprehensive ideas—especially those relating to history, politics and ethics. For the very best of these ideas he was doubtless indebted to Christianity; as will be seen clearly enough in the abstract subjoined. If ever the philosopher speaks in language that is clear to men of ordinary intelligence, it is when he writes thus of politics and ethics, which must ever, he says, be united.

Man—he says—is born in nature, but it is his destination to come out of or to rise above nature, and to attain the freedom that essentially belongs to the mind. His first act of overcoming the separations of natural life is to recognize himself in others; or to know his fellow-men as, in substance, identical with himself. This act of mutual recognition introduces a transition from the natural *bellum omnium contra omnes* (warfare of everyone against everyone) into a rational and social state of life. The private and egotistic will becomes social and objective, and expresses itself in the sacred dictates of just laws. The morality of the individual is imperfect or one-sided, so long as it does not recognize itself in the essential institutions and conditions of society. Of these one of the first is marriage, which, says Hegel, should be regarded, not as an affair of sentiment or passion, but as a bond of the strictest obligation. Its dissolution should always be made as difficult as possible. Facile divorce is the road to social dissolution. The self-government of men in their municipal corporations should train a people to recognize the State as supreme, and to enjoy the advantages of limited and representative monarchy. [Hegel's doctrine of freedom may be stated as follows.] The progress of mankind, of which history is the record, has for its aim the liberation of men from their natural bondage under the sway of their passions, and their restoration to the freedom which belongs essentially to the mind of man. This freedom must be at once internal and external, including, first, liberation from an innate servitude to nature, and, secondly, freedom of action in accordance with laws founded in universal reason. The aim of the world's progress is to realize more and more this, the common liberty of many persons acting in concert and as having one will—a freedom that shall be outwardly expressed in just institutions, and inwardly enjoyed in a cheerful assent to external laws. There the mind shall

find in external institutions only the expressions of its own true thoughts, and in this union of the mind with the social and political world there can exist no sense of bondage; for all bondage implies disunion. The three chief stages in the development of the idea of freedom may be named respectively the Oriental, the Antique-European (or Grecian), and the Christian. In the first stage—Oriental Despotism—one monarchic will alone is free. The eastern despot is the solitary “Ego;” the constitutional king is the dot placed over the letter i. When Friedrich Wilhelm III was told that Hegel had called the King of Prussia “a dot,” he replied, with good humour, “Well; but the dot is wanted to make the letter complete.”

We have noticed, oftener than once, how strangely men have forgotten the simple historical fact—that our modern idea of freedom is one for which we are indebted to Christianity (pp. 204-7; 222-4). This fact, as we see here, is not overlooked by Hegel. It is noticed especially in his “Philosophy of History;” and is often mentioned in various other parts of his writings. We give here an abstract of his ideas respecting Christian freedom.

A true king, says Hegel, represents the will of reason as supreme over all self-will, including his own. In a despotic State, morals, laws, and religious institutions are all external, or, in other words, are not reflected in the individual conscience. They may be, or indeed must be, more or less intelligible and reasonable, for God governs the world; but they are not firmly based upon moral freedom. The great work of the ancient free states of Greece was, therefore, to prevent the spread of Oriental Despotism in Europe. Hence the battles of Marathon, Thermopylæ, and Platæa were fought for the interest of the whole world, and Alexander's victories were made agents for extending civilization and culture. But the development of freedom in the states of antiquity was partial. It existed there in a harsh contrast with the condition of the slaves. Freedom was a special privilege enjoyed by the citizens of a certain state, but was not defined as the general destination of man. The Athenians had, indeed, no true general ideas either of God or of man. “The God of the Nations” was, for the Athenians, “an unknown God.” Accordingly, there was an absolute gulph left between themselves and all barbarians; in other words, all the peoples who were not Greeks. The question has been raised, “why has the institution of slavery disappeared from modern Europe?” and first one ground, then another, has been referred to, in order to explain the remarkable fact.

But the true ground is found only in the essential principle of Christianity itself. The Christian religion is the religion of absolute freedom. This great thought that freedom is the universal destination of man was first introduced to the world by the Christian religion, and can be realized only by a universal sway of Christian morality.

There was nothing in the whole of Hegel's teaching that, during his life-time, served so well as this doctrine of freedom to recommend the general tendency of his philosophy. Its leading principle was thus made comparatively clear, when it was developed as illustrated in the true Christian idea of freedom.

Freedom and law, he says, are opposite notions, and their opposition is so strong that unhappily many minds can never grasp the two as one. Yet what is abstract freedom in itself but a mere wilful negation of all the bonds of society? And, on the other side, what are just laws but necessary means for the attainment of true freedom? Grasp the two thoughts in their own union, and you have the more comprehensive thought of a true and spiritual liberation of the will from the slavery of nature and egoism—the act of liberation which expresses itself as personality. The same true and harmonizing freedom is felt as well as thought of as the love that finds its own interests in those of others. So the law that demands the sacrifice of the first false and egotistic freedom leads to the development of another and a higher freedom which is identical with true happiness. In the ethics of the Christian religion this only true process of liberation is described as a union so perfect, that Christian liberty is in fact only another name for love.

As we have already intimated, no part of Hegel's philosophy has led into so many wordy and confused controversies as that which relates especially to historical religion. The discussions here suggested will be more distinctly noticed in some later pages, where we shall have to define chiefly the two opposite interpretations of Strauss and Pfleiderer. Meanwhile some little attention must be paid to his doctrine of æsthetics. The individual man, we are told, must rise above his early subjection to nature, must subdue its passions, and make himself, to a certain degree,

independent of its cares and perturbations, before he can enjoy in art the expression of ideas through a sensuous medium. He is then able to contemplate nature as a transparent veil through which divine ideas are shining. In architecture the material element prevails over the intellectual. In sculpture every part of the material employed serves the purpose of expressing the idea; but the soul still finds no perfectly adequate expression. Something is wanting to animate the work of art; and this animating soul, with its rich and powerful language of lights and shades, as well as forms and colours and softly-blending or clearly-contrasted tones, finds a higher expression in painting. Art finds a more subjective form of expression in the sensations and emotions that are blended in music. Then all the powers of art are united in poetry. The richer and deeper the thought expressed in a poem, the higher the value of poetry; but the thought must be clothed by imagination and not barely presented as in science. Thus the "Antigone" of Sophocles is a sublime tragedy, of which the form is truly dramatic, while the substance is a profound truth—the assertion of divine and eternal laws:—

*ἄγραπτα κάσφαλῇ θεῶν
νόμιμα. . . .*

Hegel had the highest admiration of the poetry and the artistic culture of the ancient Greeks; but he described their religion—"the religion of beauty"—as too shallow to be permanent. It could not, he says, endure a philosophical investigation. On the contrary, he speaks of Christianity as "the absolute revealed religion," and as revealing truth in the form in which "it must appear for all mankind." He speaks of a rejection of what he calls the fundamental doctrines of Christianity on account of some associated historic doubts and difficulties as "foolish and pitiable." Still the question has been proposed, and often repeated:—"What did he really believe historically respecting the

chief tenet of the Christian Religion?"—He thus defines its principal idea:—"The essence of religion is a reconciliation of the Infinite with the Finite. In its earliest stage, religion appears as a prostration of the mind under the deified powers of nature; then follows Judaism, 'the religion of sublimity,'—a faith in one Supreme Intelligence and Moral Will as the Ruler of an elect people."—This is surely a poor idea of Judaism, which served especially to impress on the minds of men the idea of holiness—a fact granted by the author, in other parts of his writings. Here he goes on next to place Judaism in contrast with Hellenism—"the religion of beauty,"—in which men, or the attributes of men, appear as gods, but without a true and powerful subordination of nature. The gods of Greece were not spiritual. By the Christian Religion alone, the eternally true and real union of the divine with the human is revealed in the sufferings of the Mediator and in the forgiveness of sins. It might be supposed, that the question above named would be answered by such words as these; or by the following, taken from a speech delivered in Berlin (1830):—

"We are taught by our doctrine of Christian liberty, that to every man belongs the privilege of knowing God, and of approaching him in adoration and prayer. Each for himself has a faculty of access to God, who distinctly makes himself known in each individual conscience. He whom we adore is not subject to any of the passions [or limitations] of nature. He is truth and eternal reason, having [in himself] the consciousness and intelligence of that reason. With this consciousness of reason God has willed that man also shall be endowed; shall thus be made different from animals, and shall in truth be made God's image; so that the human mind—a spark of eternal light—shall be made pervious to that light. Moreover, in order that man may thus be endowed, God has revealed to the human race the truth, that to himself belongs—as *immanent in himself*—the idea of human nature. He thus has made known his

will, that men should love God, and have power and confidence of access to his presence.*

The "philosophy of religion"—it is said—has to show how the ideas set forth in history, believed by the Church, and known as true in the experience of believers, are moreover to be conceived as links belonging to one sequence of ideas. Out of this general proposition, concerning the relations of philosophy and religion, have arisen mostly the questions and discussions that were formerly protracted to a wearisome degree, and at the present time are not forgotten. Some notion of that "strict sequence" by which, it is said, "religious philosophy is made distinct from religion," may perhaps be conveyed most readily by means of the subjoined abstract:—

It has already been shown [in the history of religion] that man's most distinct characteristic is his capability of religious feeling, faith, and thought. He is conscious, or can be made conscious of the truth, that he must not live in and for himself alone. Yet to a large extent he does live so; and hence his consciousness of sin. It is obvious that this consciousness has been especially deepened and strengthened by Christianity; but it has also existed in all ages. For example, when we go back far beyond our era, we may read in the "Rigveda" words like these addressed to Varuna, one of "the gods of heaven:"—"Forgive us our hereditary guilt, and that which we have incurred through the act of our own hand."† This consciousness of

* The original Latin is subjoined:—"Libertatem autem Christianam eam esse intelligimus, ut unus quisque dignus declaratus sit, qui ad Deum accedat cum cognoscendo, precando, colendo, ut negotium quod sibi cum Deo sit, Deo cum homine, quisque cum Deo ipso peragat, Deus ipse in mente humana perficiat. Neque cum Deo aliquo negotium nobis est, qui naturæ affectibus sit obnoxius, sed qui sit veritas, ratio æterna, ejusque rationis conscientia et mens. Hac autem rationis conscientia Deus hominem esse præditum atque ita a brutis animalibus diversum voluit, ut Dei esset effigies, atque mens humana, quippe æternæ lucis scintilla, huic luci pervia. Ideo porro, quod homo Dei esset imago, Deus humanæ naturæ ideam sibi vere inesse mortali generi palam fecit, atque amari se ab hominibus et permisit et voluit, eisque sui adeundi infinitam largitus est facultatem ac fiduciam."

† Rigveda; vii., 86.

sin is at once man's misery and his most distinctive feature. In his self-assertion—however bold and determined—he remains still conscious of a presence by which his own will is and ought to be limited and controlled. There is in a word duality in his nature; and unless all sense of this duality be removed, he cannot enjoy that true freedom which is found only in a sense of reconciliation and union. Accordingly, man wants nothing less than a liberation from himself. He cannot find this by means of any mere flight from nature; nor in anything like Stoicism, which would be but an attempt to assert his independence. But may he not, by his own higher will, or by means of persevering ethical self-reformation, find reconciliation?—To many this may at first sight seem possible. Man, they will suppose, may endeavour to make himself—his own will and life—conformable to his idea of the divine will. Still there remains the question of God's own will. Is this will favourable to reconciliation with man?—There can be given no sure answer, unless it have the certainty and force of a divine revelation. *It must be believed*, that the union which man would have and know, as realized in his own conscience, has first of all been revealed as a divine truth. And since this truth is one that *all men* should know, it must be clearly and objectively set forth, or made manifest *to all men*, and as a fact. As *man* God himself must appear and make himself known to mankind. The first proclamation of the universal reign of God—in the “kingdom of heaven”—must consist in the annunciation of the truth, “that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself.” The truth must be seen, and hence we are led to believe in the “stupendous fact” that God as man was born in a certain time and a certain place; that he died, and arose from the dead—to appear no more in a state of humiliation, but henceforth to make himself known as “a quickening Spirit” in the souls of all believers. In them the truth of Christ's life and death shows itself capable of an infinite expansion and realization. The Church exists, not only as a memorial, but as a continuation of that same reconciliatory process first instituted and in itself made complete in the life and death of the Mediator. What has been done *for* us must be done also *in* us. It is already done, but not as an ordinary act, that is to pass away and give place to another, or henceforth to be regarded as belonging only to history. It is not to be held as true in this merely historical sense; but as truly and for ever virtual and actual in the souls of believers. This leads to a consideration of the work left to be done by the Church.

The Church then has to afford at once historical and spiritual evidence of the truth. The former evidence is a basis, the latter a superstructure; and the two are inseparable. By means of teaching, which in the first place must be historical; by signs and forms and

sacraments, one object of faith must be constantly held in view, in order that the object of faith and the believing subject may be always distinct from each other and always united.

It might be supposed that assertions like those made in the abstract here given would set at rest questions respecting the writer's belief of one doctrine; but this has not been the case. In fact, there have been given—as we have already said briefly—not less than *three* interpretations of his teaching respecting that Christian tenet which is rightly called central (pp. 11-12). The *first* was that held by Strauss, who placed “the human race” itself as the subject of all that was said of mediation. Every man, he said, is erroneous and defective in morals as in intellect; but the errors of the individual are corrected in the development of the race. It is generally allowed that this rendering of Hegel's meaning was a mistake. The *second* interpretation is one that has been largely accepted by the men who still represent the school of speculative philosophy. As reduced to plain words, their teaching asserts only, that the leading *ideas* of the Christian faith are essentially true; while it leaves open the question how far those ideas have corresponded with historical *facts*. Of the third interpretation little needs be said now; for it is usually treated as something obsolete. It asserts—on the ground of some affirmations made by Hegel himself—that he admitted *as historically true* the central tenet of the Christian faith (pp. 192-3).* The question that might be re-opened here has been often enough debated. There was surely some deplorable obscurity in the expressions that could leave room for so much controversy. The second or middle interpretation of Hegel's religious teaching is that which must here and there be named again, since this has served as a basis for several lately-published books on the “Philosophy

* Among the passages that might be cited in support of this conclusion the following may be named:—the prefaces to the second and third editions of the “Encyclopædia;” and *the whole* of the teaching given in the “Philosophy of Religion,” vol. ii, pp. 207-70.

of Religion;" especially for a rather elaborate work by Pfeiderer.* This writer treats as always immanent in the Christian Church the *ideas* defined in the abstract already given; but he leaves unanswered the question, "how far do those ideas correspond with historical *facts*?" At the same time he contends, that his exposition of Hegel's doctrine is correct. Then how could his teacher assert, as he did so often, that in substance his faith was identical with that maintained by Lutherans? How could he speak so positively of Christianity as the truth revealed "for all men?" And again, why should he speak of the "repose" found in religion, if none save logicians can enjoy that boon? The passage where he so speaks is remarkable, and may be quoted. Aristotle, in a well-known paragraph (Metaph. xii. 7), where he speaks of God, forgets for a moment his laws of induction, and soars into poetry; so Hegel in these few words, where he speaks generally of religion, and without regard to any hard logical notions. Like that poetic strain in the ancient writer, this in the modern is unexpected; and in the midst of so much "logic," comes upon us like some chords of a hymn-tune suddenly interrupting the jarring noise of a tread-mill:—

"Religion discloses to us a region where the world's queries are answered, the problems of thought are solved, and the sorrows of experience are forgotten. We are here led into the realm of eternal truth and infinite repose; where our soul, expanding itself beyond all that is finite, finds liberation and peace. . . . Rightly the peoples of the world have esteemed faith as higher than knowledge. Among the working-days of their lives, religion has been their Sunday. Here disappears [as if absorbed in an ocean] that sandbank of finite existence to which belong our griefs and cares. Here flows the true river Lethe, where our soul drinks the water of a divine oblivion. Her sorrows, the hardness of her earthly destiny, the dark shadows of her temporal life—all, as recollections of a dreamful night, pass away."

* "Religionsphilosophie," 1878. The date of publication should be noticed; for this larger work differs widely from the writer's earlier book "die Religion" u.s.w., published in 1868.

Assuredly, for every student of the controversies that arose out of the "logic" (in 1831-41) there is a consolation in the thought, that some day those wranglings will be forgotten. They must, however, be noticed so far as to make clear, in an historical way, their general result as regards Christian faith, and this result must be borne in mind, if the reader would understand what follows; especially the ruling ideas of certain writers of the last twenty years. In Germany, during this time, politics, materialism, the Darwinian philosophy of evolution; these and various schemes of social democracy, have been the chief forces moving public opinion. In the present day, there live multitudes of men, intelligent in their own secular way, who care as little for speculative philosophy as for religion. They believe everything that philosophy has said against religion, and *vice versa* everything the latter has said against the former; so that the result is a negation of the most sweeping kind imaginable.

Still there are left here and there thoughtful men, who wish to find some harmony of faith and reason; and—strange as it may appear—among those who reject at once both Christianity and the teaching of Strauss (in 1873) there are found men who dread the thought of a future left utterly destitute of religion. Accordingly, during late years there has taken place—though amid an overwhelming spread of materialism—some revival of philosophical studies; and attention has been chiefly directed to one hypothesis—that which we have called the second or middle interpretation of Hegel. If this be clearly understood, it will make clear almost everything that has followed since the breaking-up or self-destruction of the "Hegelian School." The analysis of its several tendencies—as already given—will no doubt seem tedious, but the task, however thankless to the writer, has been inevitable; for out of one of those tendencies—that which we have styled the middle interpretation—has arisen the construction of ideas of which Baur is the chief representative. It is remarkable that thus out of a

speculative system—and one generally regarded as abstruse—there has arisen a view of historical Christianity that makes clearer, or more pointed, the question of belief or unbelief. This will be noticed in the course of some following chapters, of which a general outline may here be briefly given.

It will first be shown how Schleiermacher made prominent the central tenet of Christianity, and in its defence united the two arguments, ethical and historical. On the other side Strauss ignored the ethical argument, and then, with ingenuity and some novelty of style, attacked the early history of Christianity; especially by means of his theory of myths. Baur, a man of greater learning, constructed a theory of “tendencies,” and endeavoured to show how the Christian faith, as defined by the Early Church, was a result obtained by a gradual development of ideas, taking place in the course of three centuries. Several of Baur’s conclusions were accepted by Strauss in the reconstruction of his own book (1864). The theory so built up by the two writers has for its basis *one supposition*—that as regards the first century, there exists to a very large extent a want of historical evidence, whether direct or indirect, respecting the belief then held by the Church.

CHAPTER XVII.

SCHLEIERMACHER.

IN 1800, if it had been predicted that faith, or any reverent tendency toward religion, would in the course of some twenty years be so far restored in Berlin that teaching like Schleiermacher's would there be accepted, a fulfilment of the prediction might well seem highly improbable. In 1840—when the panic excited by Strauss had subsided—a prediction to the effect that men calling themselves Christians would, in the course of a few years, utterly reject that teaching, might also seem unlikely to be fulfilled. These remarks may indicate the position held by Schleiermacher and by those who, in a sense more or less direct, might be called his disciples. His position—viewed with regard to his own intention—was mediative. A tendency toward union was the power by which his later life was especially controlled; and indeed his whole life might be included, since nothing is said here respecting his special doctrines. In his youth, when his speculations were as bold as Schelling's, his teaching was usually defined as his own form of "pantheism;" and his mind was then not liberated from errors that may be found in the earlier writings of his friend, Friedrich Schlegel. The early writings of great men are sometimes remembered too well, when revival of their memory is made painful. Thus from time to time we are reminded of the somewhat trivial fact, that men of great energy must—like other men, but with more than ordinary peril—pass through the stages of boyhood and youth. "I will never grow old in my soul," said Schleiermacher, in one of his earlier essays. The

resolution—a characteristic of his early enthusiasm—was well sustained throughout the course of his life, of which some brief account may be given. Our attention will be chiefly directed to the time 1820-34, when his religious teaching was most developed; especially as regards his Christology.

FRIEDRICH DANIEL ERNST SCHLEIERMACHER, born at Breslau (1768), was educated at Barby, in a school belonging to the United Brethren, of whose tenets some brief notices have been given (p. 311). The impressions left by early instruction never faded away from his memory. They remained with him, even when he wandered far into speculation and scepticism; and thus we may understand how at one time he was described as “a pious sceptic.” It was not any special doctrine that was retained; but it was a religious sense, such as may exist where hardly any definite belief is found. This was the feeling, the habitual state of consciousness, more enduring than all other feelings, which Schleiermacher, in later years, described as “a sense of absolute dependence”—a feeling pervading the soul, and especially awakened at the time when endeavours are made to live and act in accordance with the dictates of holiness. This impulse, if righteously obeyed—he tells us—must lead men to Christian faith and obedience; but “not without the aid of the Church.” In these words he gives us briefly the substance of his most characteristic teaching, which was expanded in his work on “The Christian Faith” (1821 and 1830).

When about twenty years old, he left the society of the United Brethren, and soon afterwards went to Halle, where his theological studies were continued. Here in 1806 he was engaged as preacher to the University, and as professor of both theology and philosophy. In 1809 he was appointed professor of theology at Berlin; and here he was also engaged as a preacher at the Trinity Church. He was eminent at once for his eloquence in the pulpit, and for the dialectic acuteness displayed in his lectures. His theological views, but vaguely expressed in his earlier

writings and called "pantheistic" in their general tendency, were still (in 1821) such as left undetermined his belief of certain tenets, and served to suggest doubts on some serious questions. He remained, however, faithful to his main principle—that without Christian faith no firm basis can be found for ethics; and he went on to say, that true ethical and religious feeling, as he understood it, never had existed apart from the life of the Church. This was especially the principle that placed him in opposition to the "religious philosophy" most especially prevalent in his own age, and still extant in the present day. Those few writers who now represent that philosophy have especially this one principle in view when they renounce the teaching of Schleiermacher.* It is their aim to show that it is impossible to develop his main principle, and still to retain the doctrine they would maintain as true respecting the subordinate position of the Church. Accordingly they regard as already refuted or abandoned every proposition that may be viewed as one accordant with that first principle. Obviously discussion of such a point might open a large ecclesiastical question. Enough is said to show where and how the teaching of Schleiermacher is related to the views of several "speculative" writers living in our own day. On their side it is contended, that they must renounce his first principle; while on the other side their chief opponent contends that in so doing they must also renounce the profession of Christianity.†

Their views will be more distinctly noticed in some later pages. We return to the time 1820-34. What was the true character of the opposition then existing between Christology, as expounded by Schleiermacher, and the religious philosophy of the Hegelian School? The former was based on the *facts* of Church history; the latter on a supposed development of *ideas*, defined as at all times immanent in the mind of man. On the former side ethics

* Pfeiderer; "Religionsphilosophie" (1878), pp. 662-6.

† Hartmann; "Die Krisis des Christenthums" (1880), pp. 114-15.

were made a clue leading to revealed truth; on the latter the intellect was made predominant in ethics as in religion. The opposition was one of an extreme character; and it was remarkable that—although no personal cause of difference was known—the relations existing between the two professors, Schleiermacher and Hegel, were singularly cold. One seemed to exercise toward the other something like a repelling power. The latter, in several of his lectures, spoke with severity respecting the error of making feeling a basis of faith. On this point there has been ascribed to the professor of philosophy a saying so shallow, that one is disposed to judge at once that it cannot be authentic. “If a feeling of dependence might be called religious,” it was contended that “religious sentiment might in some cases be ascribed to animals.” There is no logic in the remark; for “the sense of absolute dependence” is predicated of a moral agent who is conscious of his own sinfulness.

The saying served, however, to amuse the sciolists so numerous in Berlin in the time 1827-31, when logic was especially triumphant, and Schleiermacher’s teaching was, comparatively speaking, cast into the shade. It has been said that he was unduly sensitive of this temporary neglect. The notion has been partly founded on a trivial anecdote. One day in 1831, he received a visit from a young man, who had come to Berlin in order to complete his studies. In the course of their conversation, the sudden decease of Hegel was made known to the visitor, whose surprise was great. “It was to hear *him*,” said he, “that I came to Berlin.” The visitor was David Strauss; and the professor of theology (it is said) was visibly hurt by the remark. This tells nothing to account for their subsequent opposition of views. The fact was, that the visitor—then hardly twenty-four years old—had already arrived at his conclusion respecting the question which his own writings afterwards made so prominent:—Is our Christian belief a result of historical *facts*; or of *ideas* developed by means of “mythical stories?” In later years this question has been

variously modified ; and instead of "myths" we read now of "tendencies," of "favourable conjunctions of circumstances," and especially of "a union of Judaism with Hellenic philosophy." These, it is said, are the causes to which the origin and development of the Church may be ascribed.

Teaching directly opposite to this is found in Schleiermacher's "Lectures on Christology;" and it was especially against his conclusions, as given in these lectures, that the attacks of Strauss were in the first instance directed.

These observations may serve to make clear the general aim of some later writers, who are in fact followers of Strauss, though they modify certain details of his theory. They show more biblical learning than he possessed, and avoid some of his conclusions ; but their aim is still one essentially like his own. They would put *ideas* in the place of *facts* ; while they all agree in their opposition to the teaching of Schleiermacher, especially the doctrine of his Christology. Since his time no elements that are essentially new have been added to the argument on one side or on the other.

It is impossible here to give an analysis of Schleiermacher's most extensive work, "The Christian Faith;"* or to give any fair account of his writings on questions mostly ecclesiastical. His endeavours to develop among students belonging to his own confession a higher estimate of Christian ethics, and of their union with historical belief, were recognized as valuable, not only by his disciples, but also by many who did not agree generally with the tenets of his theology. After a life of hard labour, of which he seemed never to be weary, he died aged sixty-five, in February, 1834.

His writings and his life's work cannot be viewed fairly, unless we have some considerable knowledge of his time. If there was one trait more prominent than all others in that time, it was intellectual presumption. The remark

* "Der Christliche Glaube," 2te Ausg. 1830.

must be applied especially to the school of philosophy that in Berlin made itself dominant during the later years of his life. The pride of reason has rarely asserted itself so boldly as it did among the younger men of the period; and seldom has it been associated with a greater want of self-knowledge. For the most part they were men not well qualified for the study of the philosophy of which they talked so boldly. Consequently they were held together for a time by a common respect for their master; and after his decease they were soon divided into factions. The peace formerly talked of as "restored between faith and knowledge" was found to be an illusion; and the philosophy, lately called conservative, was made a basis for teaching revolutionary doctrines. "Pride goes before a fall." Some years before the time here noticed, Friedrich Schlegel indirectly predicted that intellectual pride might soon be followed by "a general contempt of philosophy;" and this prediction was fulfilled soon after the dissolution of the Hegelian School. It was divided into three sections:—the Right, the Centre, and the Left. The men on the Right maintained that the teaching of the school was consistent with existing religious and political institutions, or, in other words, was both orthodox and conservative. It was on the Left—represented by Strauss in theology—that the innovations were made which led most speedily to the dissolution. The doctrines asserted by other men of the extreme Left were denounced as atheistic and revolutionary. The general result was that interest in all inquiries formerly included under the name of speculative philosophy rapidly declined, and a materialism of the grossest type was soon introduced, to take the place of the logic that had made itself "absolute." The men of Berlin now look back on that ideal time, and call it "a period of intellectual intoxication."

Among those who condemned the intellectual presumption of that time, the most noticeable man was ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER (1788-1860), whose chief book—first published, or rather printed, in 1819—was intended to make

ethics predominant over all intellectual systems. The metaphysical men of his time were neglecting—he said—the true force by which the world is governed; for “it is will, not reason, that governs the world.” This doctrine is urged to its extreme conclusion. The understanding—says this writer—is always subservient to the will. Therefore no change of human nature can ever be effected by the spread of doctrines. A man at rest will argue with you, by way of pastime (just as he would play at draughts), but let his will be roused; then appeal to his logical notions, and you will find how much he really cares for them. Tell the theoretical democrat or leveller, when he acts as a tyrant, that his conduct is inconsequent. He will laugh at you. He always was, at heart, a tyrant; he now can show it, and does so. Doctrines are forms; the will supplies their contents. Just as a vehicle may convey substances having wholesome, or injurious, or indifferent properties, so any system of thinking may be made to bear any purport, good or bad. Our will unconsciously makes and rules the world.

This first principle does not represent the whole of Schopenhauer's teaching. He has next to explain the origin of such principles as sympathy, benevolence, and self-sacrifice; and this he attempts to do by telling us that the will, which he has so far described as asserting itself, is free, and can therefore deny itself. It is led to self-denial by arriving first at the highest state of intelligence. “The principle of individuation” on which egotism is based, is seen to be a delusion and a source of endless miseries. Self-denial now assumes the character of sympathy, which, says Schopenhauer, is the basis of all true ethics. We cannot trace a logical sequence in this passage from egotism to sympathy. Waiving that difficulty, however, we may notice how the author proceeds to show that sympathy must lead to an entire resignation of will—the one complete virtue, which is found, he says, only among Buddhists and ascetic Christians of the primitive school. That this resignation is possible is proved by

many facts in the history of the Church. The book containing this doctrine had a singular fate. At the time of its first appearance it was almost totally neglected; and the author remained silent for about sixteen years. In 1836 he published a small work, "The Will in Nature," suggesting views singularly like those now called "Darwinian." In later years, his ethical teaching gained many disciples. Here it is named as one among many expressions of restless doubts and inquiries, especially characteristic of the time 1820-36. It has been noticed how, during the spread of the older rationalism, there was excited but little intellectual disturbance among the Catholics of South Germany (p. 248), and a similar remark might for the most part apply to this later time. Yet there were now not altogether absent signs of doubt and unrest. Among the few innovating men whose speculations were condemned by the Church, the most noticeable man was the mystic author FRANZ VON BAADER. He contended especially that moral and physical evil are indissolubly united, and that evil in the material world and in human society is the result of an insurrection against divine authority. If we saw a criminal beheaded, says Baader, it would be absurd to ascribe his death to the sharpness of the axe; and it is as absurd to ascribe to physical causes the evil and the misery that prevail in the world. In this way he was opposed to the errors of pantheism; but in some other respects his own views were presumptuous. With regard to the Church, two principles seldom found in connection were asserted by this writer; and the latter especially to an extent utterly immoderate and unguarded:—"The knowledge of the laws of his own spiritual life is neither innate in man nor can it be obtained by his reasonings. He must, first of all, receive it by the testimony of others, and as the result of their experience. . . . We see, therefore, the necessity for the foundation and the maintenance of the Church. The absence of such an institution in the world would be a contradiction of divine goodness. As long as

religion and its doctrines do not receive from speculative philosophy a respect founded upon free inquiry and sincere conviction, so long the religion that is not respected will not be loved. If you would have the practice of religion thrive, you must take care that its theory is made intelligible." Thus he defends his own "gnosis."

Much more might be told of the endless warfare of opinions that disturbed the minds of men during the later years of Schleiermacher's life; but enough has been said to indicate the source of his earnestness when he endeavoured to find in Christian ethics a place of repose and a support of religious faith. He was a man of high intellectual culture; but he knew that religion could not have its true basis in the intellect. Philosophical notions respecting the genesis of religion, and speculative views travelling far beyond the bounds of ordinary minds, could do nothing, said, to restore a true and practical faith. He therefore wished earnestly to find in ethical and religious facts a sure basis of faith; and thus was led on to the ethical-religious doctrine developed in his Christology. Whatever were his errors and "inconsistencies"—much may be said of the latter—he was eminently a man of wide sympathy; one who could feel the force of the sentiment expressed in such lines as these:—

"Through a night of doubt and gloom,
Millions travel toward the tomb;
No kind hand their footsteps guides
To the home where love abides;
Tones of truth within them stirred
Meet with no kind answering word;
But all along their stormy way
Howl the winds, and lightnings play,
And thunders roll, and never cease—
Instead of angels chanting 'peace.'"

It is, says Schleiermacher, our sympathy with the spiritual wants of mankind that should make us first of all disposed to accept a divine revelation of which the central truth is at once spiritual and historical, and though

profound yet clear. Truth to be received by all men must be made manifest in a Person.* In no other way can it be made actual, clear, and definite. Truth must be made manifest to all men, and must appear as at once human and divine. In no other way can it be authoritative; or afford a universal basis of faith. Whatever limitations are connected with our familiar applications of the word "person" must here be set aside, when we speak of One who is the Saviour of all who believe in him, and who is always present with his followers; that is to say, in his Church. The life of the Church is more than a testimony in support of historical truth; it is a continuance of his own self-manifestation.† Elsewhere we may make a division between ideas and facts; and may speak of an ideal that has never been realized, or never can be. In our Christian belief we find rest. That which our soul requires and that which the mind can believe are no longer set apart when we find rest in the truth affirmed by the conscience of believers; that is to say, in the truth of which the Church has been and remains a living witness and manifestation. In the Church of Christ there has been developed a sure consciousness of union with God; there has been made manifest a life that, as regards its origin, continuation, and aim, cannot be merely human, but must have its source in one in whom the human and the divine are united. Faith, based in this union, has ever been and still remains the all-pervading soul of the Christian Church, and this faith exists ever in union with a sense of dependence on Christ.

It is obvious that these propositions may suggest the question "how is the Church to be defined?" In reply it may be noticed—in a way strictly historical—that Schleiermacher's definition of the Christian Church is very comprehensive—one that is disowned or ignored by his opponents; and to such an extent as seems equal to a *petitio principii* involved in certain parts of their reasonings. As evidences

* Christliche Glaube; vol. i, § 10, and *passim*.

† Christliche Glaube; vol. i, §§ 1-11.

against the divine origin of Christianity, they can cite instances of controversy in the Early Church; but of any favourable or commanding evidence, such as Schleiermacher accepts, they know nothing. This is the common negation in which several of his opponents—otherwise differing among themselves—agree in their opposition to his views. They ignore the existence of the Church, so far as it is said to be a valid testimony of Christ's divinity. They reject the *first premiss* on which his whole subsequent argument is founded. Enough has been said on this point, to show that our first limitation (p. 1), excluding remarks that might lead into ecclesiastical controversy, is one that is strictly demanded. Without further interruption, the remainder of Schleiermacher's teaching—so far as regards his Christology—may now be given in the form of an abstract. It will here be seen that he finds in the ideal Christ of the Church a presence that, as he contends, must lead to belief in Christ's divinity.

Schleiermacher wishes to make distinct from all metaphysical reasonings the evidence that he defines as existing within the conscious life of the Church—that is to say, within the communion created and still sustained by a faith that is at once historical and spiritual. This evidence is, in the highest sense of the word, *ethical*; it is that afforded by the spiritual and practical life of which Christ is the source. Christian ethics are widely different from secular morals, such as are but a *sine quâ non* of social existence. These morals—however useful in their right place—belong naturally to man as to a creature endowed with reason. In their practical results, secular morals may sometimes correspond with the ethics of a higher life; but the latter are distinguished by their first motive and their final aim. Yet the natural and the supernatural are not to be set apart as if utterly and hopelessly separated; for man in his natural state has a capacity of rising toward a higher life. His reason serves partly as his guide, since it refuses to acknowledge as normal its real and practical subjection to

his evil passions. His natural mind is rightly defined as a will opposed to the mind that is spiritual, and yet it is capable of receiving a new bias; and reason, though now degraded, may, through the influence of divine grace, serve to lead man toward union with God.

These are the facts that make man capable of a religious life. But capacity must be attended with desire, before we can see and know the force of the evidence leading to our acceptance of the truth—that in Christ the love of God is revealed. The evidence is at once spiritual and historical. A picture set before us may be viewed in two ways. One spectator sees clearly all the traits of the painting; but does not see the artist's idea. Another sees at once the traits and that which they express. So true faith must be at once spiritual and historical. The portraiture of Christ may be viewed, so that an assurance of historical reality is the sole result. In the intuition of which the result is a true faith the real and the ideal, the historical and the spiritual, are united. There is left no longer remaining any sense of division, when Christ is known as a Saviour. There is left no distrust; but there remains with the believer his sense of dependence. This is henceforth developed in all his further experience, and is not to be described as a first principle merely elementary, or as insufficient to define the whole character of a religious life. As viewed by Schleiermacher, the sense of dependence is one uniting itself with all other and more specialized religious feelings. It is their common bond. There are worldly morals that accord with the assertion of individual independence; but a feeling of dependence, and a consciousness of the fact, that our impulses, so far as good or holy, have not their source in ourselves—these are the distinct traits of a Christian life.

Christian ethics cannot exist apart from that union with Christ in which they first of all had their source; and on which they continually must depend for their life and vigour. Independence and disunion belong to another sphere—the world. There indeed men may apparently all seek the same

things, and yet may know nothing of any true union; for each wishes to possess only that which he can call exclusively his own. One may find satisfaction in yielding to the impulses of his stronger passions; another may choose rather the solace attending the exercise of his gentler and more social affections. In the latter case, earthly morals may be refined; but not the less are they still earthly. Out of such morality it is impossible to develop Christian ethics in any natural way, like that in which a flower is produced out of a root. The former ethics belong to our old life; the latter to a new life of which the source, we feel assured, is not in ourselves. That old life of worldly morals has not been changed so that we may say it has been developed and refined, or ameliorated. It has passed away. That which was once identified with ourselves is now a part of a world that we call foreign; that which once was foreign is now united with our inmost life. So great is the change that has taken place in those who now belong to the Kingdom of Heaven. They are so many new inhabitants of a new world.

The introduction of Christianity—whether regarded as affecting individuals or nations—is the beginning of a new life. The history of a nation is thus divided into two periods; one preceding, the other following that beginning. Our religion is not a continuation of any Jewish, or of any heathen antecedents; but is essentially a new life. As regards all that belongs to ethical or religious life, the former things pass away, wherever the Gospel is effectually proclaimed. As history tells us, along with the evil inherent in former institutions, there may pass away and be forgotten certain pleasing traits [such as æsthetic refinements of culture] that—when viewed in themselves—might once be called good. They must now be renounced; simply because their associations are evil; they belong to the old life that has been condemned, and must perish with it. So every great transition that takes place in history is at once a death and a life; the former serves to unfold the germ

of the latter. And as in the world at large, so in every individual case—those who belong to Christ know that they have passed out of death into life. If then in every believer a new creation has taken place, the Church or communion of all believers is a new creation. In Christ—the creator of the Church—must be found therefore a sufficient source of all the life and power therein made manifest. The stream can never be more abundant than the source from which it flows. He who has created and sustained the Church must be one able to create and to sustain that faith which, in all ages, has been the life and the strength of all those who have believed in him. He must then be a Person at once human and divine—human, that he may come near to ourselves, and that between himself and ourselves sympathy and communion may be possible—divine, that he may be the object of faith; that he may be known as able to save all who come unto him. Hence the Early Church, enlightened by his Spirit therein abiding, firmly rejected on one side the Docetist, on the other the Ebionite heresy. It was made known and felt, through the influence of Christian communion, that were all other true predicates ascribed to Christ, while his real humanity was denied, there would remain no sure historical bond uniting him with the members of the Church. Such would be the result of the Docetist heresy. On the other hand, were he viewed as a man in the highest degree eminent for his righteousness and his wisdom, yet as one in whom God does not reveal himself essentially as love; then the error so defined would be the Ebionite heresy. For us the result would be, that no ultimate ground of faith could remain respecting a union that is perfect, personal, and final; and is to be viewed as true in a sense both spiritual and historical. God reveals himself in Christ as love, and in this love, pervading the souls of those who are truly united with him, we recognize his presence—his indwelling in the Church.* It is not a

* *Christliche Glaube*; vol. ii, § 165 u.s.w.

mere figure of speech, when it is said that Christ lives in his disciples. The truth is central, and cannot be illustrated fully by the use of any similitudes borrowed from the external world; it cannot be made clear to the understanding. But the understanding is not the measure of faith; that which metaphysical analysis would define as impossible is felt and known as the truth which is the life of the Church.

These are the chief propositions of Schleiermacher's faith, and the most characteristic parts of his teaching. His doctrine of mediation is not equivalent in force to the teaching of Lutheran orthodoxy; for several points belonging to the old doctrine are omitted, and others are left undetermined. The idea that he makes especially prominent is this—the Church has been called into existence and sustained by One in whose holiness and love is seen a perfect manifestation of the divine nature; and the whole experience of the Church bears testimony to the truth, that in Christ our nature is united with the divine. This faith is at once historical and spiritual; and if the historical evidence, when taken alone, is not satisfactory to the natural intellect, it is because the spiritual evidence is wanting. But this may be found by all who will submit themselves to the teaching of Christ.

This cardinal truth of Christ's immanent abiding with his followers is everywhere supposed in the teaching of Schleiermacher, and is made to accord with and to support all the other articles of his faith. Of these several are left vague or are but faintly defined. He does not attempt to give any metaphysical definitions of divine attributes; but concludes that faith and reverential feeling lead to a height and depth that reason cannot explore. We cannot "by searching find out God, or know the Almighty to perfection." As love he reveals himself in Christ. "Descendit Deus ut assurgamus." To this one central faith every part of the writer's theology is made to converge. This is the attractive force and the source of life in his system of belief. By faith in

Christ believers are made to participate in the purity and happiness of a life that is divine; and God now beholds them as reconciled in Christ.*

Schleiermacher's doctrine—recommended by his personal influence and the eloquence of his preaching—was accepted by many teachers belonging to the two confessions, which had been united in 1817. His general intention was conciliatory. The ideal Church that he described seemed large enough to contain those who, on one side, were opposed to old orthodox teaching, and on the other had a dread of extreme rationalism. For some ten years after his decease the events of the time were on the whole favourable to the spread of his theology, which, as freely interpreted, by many, was called "mediative." It can hardly be said that he founded a school. His more faithful followers were comparatively few, while those who were more or less indebted to him for impulse and guidance were numerous. Their union was never strictly defined. So far, however, they held for some time their intermediate position between Lutheran orthodoxy, on one side, and extreme rationalism on the other, that the spread of the latter was to a considerable extent retarded. Meanwhile there was spread a rationalism that might in one respect be called new. It was founded—or supposed to be founded—on that speculative logic of which some account has been given; and was first made popular in a book published by Strauss in 1835.

* *Christliche Glaube*; vol. ii, pp. 99 u.s.w.

CHAPTER XVIII.

STRAUSS.—BAUR.

IN order to show their relations to earlier opinions, the views of Strauss and Baur have already been briefly noticed (pp. 232-6). That which is chiefly new in them is the fact, that they make some attempts toward construction. They endeavour to show how the Church first arose, and how her faith was widely spread, though it had no sufficient historical basis. This was a process—they tell us—that did not take place in any way that can support the doctrine called orthodox respecting the Founder of the Church. Accordingly they go on to oppose especially the tenet made prominent by Schleiermacher in his later lectures. His teaching is controverted on three distinct grounds. The first calls itself historical, and will be chiefly noticed in this chapter. The second is metaphysical, and the third is ecclesiastical. Of these two latter grounds little will be said; but they may be named. They are often assumed as first principles in arguments that for the most part are like those of Strauss and Baur.

According to the teaching of Schleiermacher, our belief in the divine origin of the Christian Religion is at once spiritual and historical, and this faith has been preserved by the Church. We must regard as essentially one the life of Christ as continued in his Church, and his life as historically portrayed in the Gospels. The power, wisdom, and love made manifest in the whole history must be ascribed to a Person, who is human and divine. In opposition to this teaching, Baur and his followers—sometimes collectively styled the “Tübingen School”—contend that the ethical and spiritual life of the Early Church, and the victorious

spread of her doctrine, are certainly remarkable facts, but such as may be understood as naturally possible, if we have only a sufficient historical knowledge of the period 1—150. Those facts were results that may reasonably be ascribed to a fusion and expansion of ideas, taking place in the midst of circumstances favourable to the development of a new religion.* Here the ground assumed is one that pretends to be historical; but there is co-existent among Baur's fixed ideas another ground of reasoning, and this is metaphysical. On this ground he and many other writers constantly assume as first of all granted certain principles that afterwards are asserted, as if their demonstration had been given. For example, we are taught in a most elaborate way, that the Church has been developed by a routine of obedience to certain "tendencies." These when fully developed make themselves ruling ideas, or established principles of action. The principle controls and guides us—says Baur—while we are ascribing to a Person the virtue of that principle. All this is repeated again and again; but nowhere is the demonstration given. The principle almost everywhere assumed by Baur as a basis of his reasonings is in fact a metaphysical dogma. The personal influence, which is ignored by him, as by many of his followers, is always supposed on his side to be impossible. This assumed impossibility is made to serve as one chief basis for the reasonings of the latest rationalism.

There exists in this latest rationalism another supposed ground of reasoning—that which we have called ecclesiastical—and it is one that must be distinctly noticed; for in numerous places it serves as a substitute for both facts and arguments, while the negation to which it leads is one that must be described as destructive. The extent of the negation implied is masked by some appearance of fairness in logic. As Semler said in the days of old rationalism, so

* F. C. Baur. "Kirchengeschichte der drei ersten Jahrhunderte;" dritte Ausg. (1863), pp. 21-2.

now it is repeated by Baur and his followers:—the Early Church was vexed by controversies, and to her authority men of various views have often appealed for some confirmation or support, on this side or on that. Consequently—since the teaching of the first two centuries is variously accepted—we must not appeal to the life and character of the Early Church, when the object is to find evidence of a divine origin in the character of the faith then prevalent. For this faith, says Baur, was not primary, but was gradually unfolded as the general result of certain controversies and subsequent conciliatory processes. The life of the Church was then sustained—we are told—not by the presence and influence of its Creator, but by a restless conflict of Jewish and heathen ideas. The exclusion of all evidence depending on the fidelity of the Church is thus made to extend to the earliest times, and of course it must hold good, we are told, with regard to the latest. Accordingly everything like an appeal to evidence supplied by the Church is to be counted—in all arguments respecting the origin of our faith—as nothing. This extreme position is maintained in opposition to the first principle assumed by Schleiermacher in his lectures on Christology. The principle—says one of his severest critics—must be described as one that cannot be consistently held by any enlightened and liberal theologian; for it would, if carried out, lead to “a deification of the Church.”* This is but one of numerous remarks made to the same effect. It is laid down as a law, that in all reasonings respecting the origin of our faith every reference to the life and experience of the Church must be excluded as involving a “*petitio principii*,” for example, if to confirm our faith we refer to the belief held by the Church in the later half of the second century, we are told that between that time and the earlier half of the first century there exists a very wide separation.

Having rejected so much of the evidence that had been

* Pfleiderer. “*Religionsphilosophie*” (1878), p. 665.

held as true and firm, Strauss and Baur proceed in the next place to construct their two theories respecting the origin of the Christian Faith.

The initial difficulty suggested by these theories is one that has often been noticed; for example by Schelling, in one of his later lectures. If we believe, first of all—he says—in that manifestation of divine power by which the Church was created, then it will inevitably follow, that sentiments of love, wonder, and adoration must have been united with the faith of early believers. In their memory records mainly true and faithfully preserved *might* borrow some colouring from an exalted imagination. We are talking here of something that may be viewed as possible. But when we see no source of any moving power, and are still asked to admit that so many “myths” or inventions spontaneously sprang as it were into being; and that these fictions at last produced a faith attended with a vast spiritual power—when we are asked to believe such a story, we are inevitably led to some questions like these:—What could the motive be that led men to devote themselves—their very lives—to this supposed process of creating fictions?—Why did they do it? and—How could they do it with such amazing success?

These are the more obvious questions suggested by the theories constructed by Strauss and Baur. Their outlines have been given (pp. 232-6); but here they must be more distinctly considered; and especially in their relation to the latest negations of our time. Since 1864 there has appeared hardly anything sceptical or destructive that may not be regarded as a natural consequence of the teaching of Strauss and Baur. They have reduced the whole question to a simple alternative:—Is Christianity an imposition; or is it a divine revelation? Men who have wished to hold some intermediate position between belief and unbelief have been driven from their middle position by these two writers. There are many who have really rejected that revelation, and have still wished to express their denial in forms as

gentle and reverent as may be. They have liked therefore to speak of "myths," intertwining themselves with certain ethical truths, as parasites grow about and hide the stems of trees in tropical forests; or they have liked rather to ascribe to "tendencies" developed in the Early Church those so-called "inventions" that cannot—we are told—be connected in any sure way with the historical realities of the Apostolic Age. In support of this latter theory there is found in Baur's reasonings almost everything that can be said; but the whole of the superstructure created by those reasonings rests—as he himself has indirectly confessed—on a nonentity. No weaker word can be used to define the basis of his reasonings. When divested of all verbiage, it amounts simply to this—That Christianity was either created or invented by St. Paul. Against this assertion—the sum and substance of the "tendency-theory"—it is not ours to contend. Truth has here on her side an advocate as real, individual, and well-known as if he were one now living in the midst of us. His epistles tell us clearly how Christianity was created. Against Baur we appeal to St. Paul. He surely knew something more than all that was ever known by Baur.

The two theories—one called "mythical," the other a theory of "tendencies developed in the Early Church"—are clearly distinct; not only in their own characters, but also in the results to which they severally lead. The former endeavours to shun everything like a charge of "imposition." The latter apparently pretends to have the same aim; but the supposition made, in order to avoid making that charge, is one that must be described as *impossible*. We are asked to believe that, in the time when the earlier Apostles and the whole multitude of their disciples were living, their great persecutor, Saul of Tarsus, was suddenly converted, by means of which we can know nothing; that almost in the same moment he conceived the idea of a new Christology—including moreover a whole body of theology—of which the earlier Apostles and their followers knew

very little or nothing; that absolutely at the same moment he conceived the idea of regarding himself as called by an immediate revelation to be an Apostle of a new and universal, or "Pauline" Christianity, of which little or nothing was known by any one, save himself; that left thus solitary, he preached that which he alone first knew and understood as the true doctrine of Christ; lastly, that after various hard conflicts with other doctrines and tendencies, this doctrine made itself predominant, and was accepted as the true belief of the Catholic Church. In order that the one great mystery of our faith may be denied, and yet some account may be given respecting the rise of the Church, it is demanded that we should accept as probable a theory like this.* Believe or disbelieve as we will, there must always remain mysteries we cannot explore. The appearance of light itself, has for our finite reason its attendant shadows; and when we know all that is required to answer our deepest inquiries, there must remain the mystery of God revealing himself as Man in Christ. But this accepted—this believed—at once are dispelled a thousand doubts; at once are answered a thousand inquiries that could lead only from one mystery to another, or from one form of doubt to another. A persistent will to reject that revelation has existed through all the various forms of rationalism, from the time of Reimarus down to the time of Strauss and Baur. And in substance there does not exist between the beginning and the end that difference which Strauss at one time supposed as existing. Beginning with his poetical theory of myths, and afterwards finding in it some defects as to plausibility—he now placed himself more or less under the guidance of Baur, and thus was led, in a rather circuitous way, back to the original position held by Reimarus. It will be understood, then, that there are here to be noticed two clearly distinct arguments against the historical truth of Christianity. The first is represented in his book published in

* Baur, "Kirchengeschichte der drei ersten Jahrhunderte;" dritte Ausg. (1863), pp. 21-174.

1835; the second in the reconstructed book published in 1864. There may be premised some brief account of his life; and this, we trust, will be made as impersonal as is possible. The chief point to be noticed is the fact, that Strauss, in his early life, was guided solely by dogmas that he accepted as the "ultima verba" of a most presumptuous "absolute logic." This, as he understood it, is the source of his own negation, and of all the later negation that has called itself "speculative" or "philosophical." The truth denied is, first of all, rejected on the ground that it is opposed to the conclusions of "absolute logic."

DAVID FRIEDRICH STRAUSS was born at Ludwigsburg, January 27, 1808. He received his early education at Blaubeuren, where one of his teachers was Ferdinand Baur. In 1825 Strauss entered the University of Tübingen, where in 1826 Baur was appointed a Professor of Theology. At this time the teaching of Schleiermacher was prevalent there; but its sway was in later years disturbed by the study of speculative philosophy, to which Strauss devoted his attention. In 1831 he went to Berlin, where his studies in theology and philosophy led him more and more into opposition to the teaching of Schleiermacher, especially as regards the tenets of his "Christology." Already in 1831, or soon after that time, Strauss had constructed the theory afterwards expounded in his book, "Das Leben Jesu," published in 1835. The publication called forth replies too numerous to be noticed. It was followed in 1841 by the writer's second book, "Die Christliche Glaubenslehre." The attention excited by this work was comparatively inconsiderable. In the same year appeared a book written by Feuerbach, in which it was made clear, that the principles asserted by Strauss must lead to a rejection of *all* religion. Every form of religious belief was now defined as a self-delusion, in which man worshipped only his own shadow.

After 1841 Strauss remained for the most part silent for twenty years, as regards all theological questions. Amid the disturbance of 1848, he was elected as a member of the

Württemberg Landtag; his political views were not democratic. He soon resigned the position and, returning to literature, wrote in the course of some following years a memoir of Reimarus, and other biographical works. Meanwhile he studied diligently the later writings of Ferdinand Baur; especially those in which his theory of tendencies was propounded. The result was that the two theories—one of “myths;” the other of “tendencies”—were more or less closely connected in the work entitled “*Das Leben Jesu*,” published in 1864. It was now described by the author as reconstructed, so as to be made more suitable for general reading. About the same time appeared two other books on the same subject; one written by Renan, the other by Schenkel. In their general tendency these three books are alike; but in their modes of treatment and as regards style they differ widely.

Among the later writings of Strauss his monograph on Voltaire (1870) may be named as a favourable specimen of his style—here more than usually light and popular. In 1872 appeared the book in which Strauss gives, in the shape of “a confession,” the results to which he has been led. This book, entitled “*The Old and the New Belief*,” gives a summary statement of the writer’s disbelief. He asserts, of himself and of others whom he represents, that they cannot see any need for themselves of a maintenance of forms of religious worship, and that they have ceased to believe in a personal God, and in a future state, as described in Christian teaching. He names, as the sacrifices he has made, all the consolations that others have derived from trust in a Saviour, from a belief in Divine Providence, and from hopes of happiness in a future state. As substitutes for these consolations, the author proposes a satisfaction attending efforts in moral self-culture, a resignation to the necessity by which the world is governed, and, thirdly, a sense of union with and dependence upon the life of the universe. In reply to the question, “Are we Christians?” the author replies for himself and friends, “No;” but he

maintains that the resignation and moral culture above named may be viewed as substitutes for religion. The culture of poetic literature and of music is also described as a substitute for religion. The writer appends some remarks of a conservative character on society and politics. "We do not for a moment deny," he says, "that hitherto the majority of men have needed a Church, or that they may long continue in need of it."

This last book was especially popular, though at the same time its tendency was denounced even by many whose views might be called sceptical or liberal in the extreme. That part of its teaching was especially reprobated in which the question of accepting materialism, as a final basis of faith and morals, was treated as one that could have but little, if any, importance. Against this it was urged, that there was nothing in the writer's earlier views that should lead to such an extreme conclusion; and it was complained, that now he had left remaining no basis for any moral teaching. The controversy that followed was painful; and meanwhile his health had rapidly failed. In the time of his last illness, he read through Plato's "Phædo," where the question of the soul's immortality is viewed in the light of reason. He died February 7, 1873.

Hardly any theory of modern days has been made more popular than the mythical theory employed by Strauss in his first work; but it is rather his subsequent doctrine of "tendencies"—mostly borrowed from Baur—that has been accepted by later writers as the basis of their negations. As regards both these theories, their common source is a philosophy that has now been defined by its later disciples and reduced to a doctrine of negation that has been made popular. Its first principles—understood in the sense already defined (p. 426)—have been accepted as readily and obediently as if they were the elements of geometry. Ideas are treated as if they were living forces, in themselves intelligent and endowed with a powerful volition—here controlling material masses; urging along the planets in

their orbits ; presiding over the evolutions of species ; nay more, giving rise to nations, and governments ; and laying the foundations of religious creeds ; also in due time destroying those same creeds and making faith, love, adoration impossible. Such were the philosophical ideas with which the minds of many young students were filled, in the time when Strauss first planned his mythical theory.

There is of course some ground for the notion that "myths" have sometimes enlarged or filled the outlines of historical portraiture. The error of Strauss is mainly one of gross exaggeration, respecting the powers he ascribes to "ideas" and "myths." In order to give some general notion of his theory, the words "idea" and "ideal" must be used rather frequently ; but their meanings, as here employed, will be familiar. The former word will serve to denote a thought, as distinct from a fact observed by the senses and recorded in history. We have an idea of freedom ; and to a large extent it corresponds with a reality established in our land. We have an ideal of a "patriot-king ;" and to a large extent it has been made historical in the portraiture of Alfred. There are traits in this portraiture—above all one, the king's marvellous love of labour—where the ideal is more than can be believed of the real man. We are thus led to call in question the historical character of the biography ascribed to Asser. It is well known that men, in certain stages of the world's history, have been capable of "hero-worship," and have expressed their homage by the invention of "myths"—fictions not intended to deceive, but serving to add to real facts a perfection that belongs only to the ideal. Thus—we may suppose, by way of illustration—our good and great king, Alfred, has been described as doing such an amount of literary work as seems incredible ; and we are led to suspect that some works written by monks have been ascribed to him. In another case—that of "King Arthur"—critics are led to suspect, that patriotic enthusiasm has not only

enlarged the portraiture, but has created almost the whole character of the hero.

These are examples of the process followed in the invention of myths; but something more is required to account for the faith by which they are accepted and held as valid. They must have a deep or permanent meaning; the shadows must indicate a substance lying behind them; the superstructure of fiction must have a basis of ideas and sentiments. Thus "hero-worship," and especially admiration of patriotism, are the sentiments that have kept alive the ideal portraiture of Alfred, and those fine myths about Arthur. These illustrations serve to indicate a general notion of the myth-theory constructed by Strauss; but in one respect they are very defective. They can but remotely suggest the extent of a theory that treats as mostly mythical the history contained in the New Testament. Again, our small illustrations utterly fail to suggest anything like the vague ideal substance supposed by Strauss—that basis of ideas by which the so-called "myths" were supported and made permanent.

Strauss grants that "the myths" have some true meaning. What is their supposed basis?—There must be ascribed a substantial, if not an historical, interest to a narrative that for so many ages has been believed; and has been intimately united with the inner life of millions. If there existed at first no historical subject like that portrayed in the myths, then it seems clear that believers have attached these myths to an ideal subject—one always existing in their minds, though never made known to them by means of their senses. "The true subject," says Strauss, "is humanity; that is to say, an idea of the whole human race." Here is his favourite notion—one often enough expressed before his day; for example by Herder (pp. 106-7) and by Goethe (p. 130). No individual, says Strauss, can claim the completion that belongs to the whole human race. The defects of individuals pass away and are lost in the develop-

ment of the race ; and to this process the predicate "divine-human" belongs. Strauss does not say exactly that men are like so many parts in one serial publication ; but he suggests the notion, and further, that the errors in each part are made good by the simple fact that it belongs to a series.

The error of ascribing to such notions as these any religious interest was made clear by Feuerbach who, in his book on the "Essence of Christianity" (1841), said clearly what Strauss had suggested—that the substance of all that has passed under the name of religion is *anthropology* ; and that *man is incapable of knowing anything higher or better than himself*. The plain language of this book was serviceable in its way. It was now made evident that in "the idea of the race," of which so much had been said, there was neither a religious nor a moral interest.

To notice all the replies called forth by the mythical theory of 1835 is impossible. In the course of a few years a new literature appeared, of which the topics mostly belonged to the history of the Early Church.* When the disturbance caused by the theory of myths had in a great measure subsided, there prevailed again in the two confessions—politically united since 1817—some hope of a time of repose. But intellectual concord is never safe where a deeper concord of faith does not exist. The influence of Schleiermacher's teaching was still widely spread among pastors and students, but could not be called a sure bond of union. Meanwhile sceptical biblical criticism, or rationalism of the old style, though it had been left for some time in the shade, was still active, and now again assumed a threatening attitude. On the conservative side there were many who

* The names of a few writers may be appended :—Ammon, Baumgarten, Dorner, Ebrard, Ewald, Francke, Hase, Hartmann (Julius), Hoffmann, Kern, Krabbe, Lange, Lechler, Lichtenstein, Neander, Osiander, Riegenbach, Rothe, Schaff, Schweitzer, Sturm, Thiersch, Thomasius, Tholuck, Ullmann, Weisse, Wieseler. Among Roman Catholic authors may be named Sepp and Hettinger.

were tired of controversy, and wished to find somewhere a quiet place of refuge. Already, in Schleiermacher's teaching, the authority of the Church had been made rather prominent. There was now felt a wish to make that doctrine more positive; and even to go back to something like old Lutheran orthodoxy.

The movement now taking place in Prussia was not altogether unlike that which had already been made at Oxford by the men who were at that time called "Tractarians;" but this had a deeper source; was guided by men of higher genius; and was not a little strengthened by its union with poetry. As one of its leaders suggested, they "would have, if possible, Wordsworth on their side." That was, however, not possible; for the poet was, as to his creed, a Church of England man of the moderate class. He did not like the views of his neighbour Arnold, because they were "not well founded," he said, "in a knowledge of human nature." On the other hand he could rest contented with the position held by the national church of his time. At Oxford a dread of rationalism was only one of the motives leading men to claim reverence for the traditions of the Church, and to assert its spiritual authority. Among men of another class German philosophy and theology led to such views as at last found expression in the "Essays and Reviews" of 1860.

Thus in England the quiet that had lately prevailed respecting religious and ecclesiastical questions was disturbed; but far more impetuous was the progress of innovation in Germany. The conservative or retrogressive movement was of short duration, and old divisions in belief were now made wider by certain hasty attempts to promote or enforce union. Meanwhile there had been made large preparations for further assaults on the faith still remaining within the united confessions. Almost contemporaneously there appeared, in 1863-4, three books—one in French, two in German—all three of the class called destructive; in some respects widely different, yet in their main tendency

alike.* It was obviously intended, in each instance, that the work should be made popular; that there should be nothing in form and style to limit the circulation of its doctrine among general readers. The intention was thoroughly fulfilled in the first book—a Parisian Oriental romance against which German competition was hopeless. Strauss was not incapable of levity; but his new book, as compared with the French romance, was serious.

It is in this book that he combines with his own mythical theory, the tendency-theory of Baur. The faith of the Church in the time 1—150 is the subject to be analysed; and this time is divided into two periods. The aim of the argument is to show how a faith developed in the later period might have no historical basis in the former, and yet might arise out of an idea then existing. This need not suppose the existence of any fraud as belonging to the former period. To make this clear, it was required to show how a transition could be made from the comparatively narrow faith ascribed to the first Christian disciples to the more comprehensive Christianity of the second century. Baur, whose dates are mostly accepted by Strauss, supposes that of all the writings included in the New Testament, only the following belong to the Apostolic Age:—St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans; his two Epistles to the Corinthians, his Epistle to the Galatians; and the Apocalypse, written probably some few years after A.D. 70. Respecting facts occurring in the earlier half of the first century Baur says little; but he finds in the Sermon on the Mount an ethical nucleus of the religion afterwards developed in the life and writings of St. Paul. The comprehensive Christianity of this apostle was—it is said—affirmed by himself, in opposition to the [*supposed*] narrower faith of the earlier apostles. In short the earlier Christians are but faintly—if sometimes apparently—made distinct from the early

* Renan, "La Vie de Jesus." 1863. Strauss, "Das Leben Jesu, für das deutsche Volk bearbeitet." 1864. Schenkel, "Das Charakterbild Jesu." 1864.

Ebionites, who were marked by an especial, fanatical opposition to Saint Paul. As far as is possible, Baur makes almost synonymous the two titles, "Ebionites" and "Jewish Christians." In writing of the latter, he describes them as the early disciples of Christ, and yet as Jews. In all respects they remained faithful to the religion of their forefathers, and were strict in their observance of the law—especially the law of circumcision. In short, they were Jews who recognized in Jesus of Nazareth their long-expected Messiah. Here one is tempted to ask: how could their faith remain "Jewish" after the time of the crucifixion?

It is of course understood by Baur and his school, that their "system"—as it has been and must be understood—can lead to no conclusion but this:—"the belief of the earliest Christians"—including the followers of Saint Peter, Saint John, and all the rest of the earlier apostles—"was generally equivalent to that more distinctly ascribed to the Ebionites," who did *not* believe in the divinity of our Lord. It is of course also well understood by Baur and his school, that this their chief dogma can be viewed as opposed to a large mass of evidence, supplied by all the writings of the New Testament, and by some considerable remains of the immediate Post-Apostolic time that are still extant. To say nothing for the present of any other evidence, there is found enough in the writings of Saint Paul to lead to a conclusion strongly opposed to the Ebionite theory. There existed in his time a belief in Christ that surely cannot be called "Ebionite." This higher belief could not be one invented or developed by the apostle himself; for he assumed that it was already well known by numerous Christians who did not derive from his teaching their first knowledge of Christ. Moreover, so surely and so clearly is the earlier period, 1-70 or thereabouts, connected with the second, 70-150, that it is impossible to account for any "development" (so-called) of the higher belief except on this simple ground—it was the true belief, founded on the evidence afforded by Christ's

own life, death and resurrection, and on *his own words* employed when he was speaking of Himself, and was defining the belief respecting Himself which he would have maintained by his followers. The faith of those called "Jewish Christians" was a faith that had been inspired by Christ himself, and had been boldly declared by his apostles, before the conversion of Saul of Tarsus. If this faith had been one of such a character that it might fairly be called "Ebionite," how could the Church—including all followers of the earlier apostles—soon afterwards accept a far higher and more comprehensive faith, though it was one made accordant with certain philosophical reasonings, and recommended by the zeal and energy of Saint Paul.

This is the question that Baur and his school have to answer. In their reply, they say much of a gradual "process of ideas," but still leave, between the faith of the first period and that of the second, a chasm—if so we may define their notion of a very wide difference in belief. Their theory of a series of disputes and conciliations is but a chain of "ideas" which is to span the aforesaid chasm. Meanwhile they neglect or undervalue the evidence direct and indirect that might be adduced on the other side. This evidence Baur for the most part evades by means of silence; in this case a sign of prudence. Strauss—in his second book—hardly recognizes the virtue of that prudence; and consequently he undertakes the task of answering a question to which Baur's reply was mostly—silence. The source of the faith widely spread by the earlier apostles, and established in Jerusalem and Rome—to say nothing just now of any other places—this source Strauss would find in the attractive power of a character eminently virtuous and amiable, though still merely human. The faith was soon enlarged, exalted, and changed into a faith in One regarded as a Person at once divine and human. How could so great a change so soon take place? Here Strauss is no longer satisfied with such a reply as might be given in accordance with his first theory of myths. He sees more or less clearly

a want of a first impulse—call it faith or enthusiasm—to account for the ready acceptation of the enlarged faith. He therefore adds now to that theory a second supposition—one to the effect that, in the course of the second period, some quasi-historical statements and certain new doctrines based upon those statements, might be *intentionally* introduced. To protect from the charge here implied the Apostolic Age itself, a line—though it seems impossible—must now be drawn between the second period and the first. The inevitable failure to draw this line suddenly reduces the whole discussion to a simple alternative:—we must accept or reject a conclusion which both Strauss and Baur are willing to leave for the most part buried in silence. In short their failure—as to drawing that line—must lead them beyond all talk of “myths,” “Pauline ideas,” and “later tendencies,” to a distinct charge of falsehood—imposition. Never before was there known such a warning against the danger of “proving too much.” Strauss and Baur, in all their discussions respecting the origin of the Church and her faith, had always been moving on toward one conclusion; but when they came to it—they would hardly name it. Their supposed distinct later period—70-150—is an invention useless even for their own own intention. The faith they would define as then invented is found in Saint Paul’s writings, of which the dates are not later than 60, and in the Apocalypse, of which the date is not much later than 70. It is impossible to show how a faith accepted generally by the Church in 150 could then be so well accepted if it had not been transmitted from the Apostles—transmitted so faithfully and held so firmly by multitudes—in their “*regula fidei*”—that then and in later time they were comparatively careless about evidence contained in *written* documents. Again, it was for the Apostles impossible either to receive or to transmit such a faith, had it not been given to them immediately as founded on the highest possible authority.

On the part of Strauss and Baur, whose reasonings had

led them to utter negation, there followed an evasion of their own conclusion; and this evasion—so far as direct expression of their negation is concerned—may be regarded as a kind of unwilling yet instinctive reverence; or as an involuntary confession of the fact, that they hardly liked the ultimate result of their own “absolute logic.” Well might they shrink from it, when it was exposed to the self-evidential light that shines out in the Gospels, and is clearly reflected in the writings of St. Paul. We have simply left this alternative—to believe what the apostle has said, or to be guided by Baur.

As all men know—believers and unbelievers—next to divine love, the strongest distinctive trait stamped everywhere on every society, every soul, every life, truly belonging to Christ, is self-humiliation. To prove this, not a single text will here be quoted; for if one were named, many scores might suggest themselves as having equal claims to our attention. The fact is, that here the moral conscience of humanity—darkened though it is—can still bear witness to the truth—truth that may be rightly called human, while it is also pre-eminently Christian—the indisputable truth, that just in proportion as we are making improvement in our moral and religious life, in proportion as we are becoming more and more conscious of our sins and failings, and are striving to make ourselves free from their tyranny—just in this proportion do we sink deeper and deeper into self-humiliation. Now when “driven to bay” by such assaults as, in these latter days, are made against the very centre of our faith, we must neither practise nor allow any evasion of the final question—the question often suggested by Strauss and Baur, and then evaded—left without any satisfactory answer. How could it be that, in union with perfect holiness and self-humiliation, there could exist a thought of saying, with regard to power and dominion, one word more than the truth itself—one word more than was at once in full accordance with spotless moral purity, profound self-humiliation, clear self-knowledge, absolute agreement with and

submission to the will of God?—Is there in the life of Christ, or in the early development of his Church—in his character as seen immediately or as reflected in the lives of his apostles and disciples—is there anything that ought to suggest such a possibility?—Or if it must be again and again suggested (by Renan with a boldness especially his own), why should there be cast on faithful, devoted apostles and disciples a censure that does not belong to them? And why all this labour in the invention of “myths,” “tendencies,” and “developments of ideas,” to account for the gradual spread of an error that—if supposed as possible—must have been created before their time? Lastly, why all this laborious discussion about the dates of writings included in the canon of the New Testament? In several respects the inquiry is indeed highly interesting; but as regards the main question, a very large proportionate part of all the arguments about the authenticity of various parts of the canon may be viewed as irrelevant, or as superfluous.

The force of these questions will be felt, as soon as we see clearly the character of the alternative to which we are led by the “system” of Baur. His teaching respecting the rise and progress of the Church is advisedly called a “system.” With regard to its vast display of reading, and the industry exerted in compiling an enormous mass of historical-biblical criticism, it may be called the most elaborate of all the plans of warfare directed against the historical evidences of Christianity. To speak with greater precision—the system of Baur and the rest of the “Tübingen School” is one especially antagonistic against the divine power and authority of Christ himself. This being the main characteristic of the school, it is obviously desirable—on one side, and on the other—that as far as is possible personal names should be avoided. Accordingly, in the further account to be given of Baur’s teaching, it will mostly be convenient to call it his “system.” The faith which it is intended to destroy is that expressed in the central tenet of Christianity (pp. 9-12).

The "system" is the last of the three phases of modern unbelief. Of the first the basis was deism (pp. 41-63). This was substantially the faith held by "rationalists of the old school," whose attacks upon Christianity consisted mostly of destructive biblical criticism. In the second phase of unbelief is recognized the influence of Kant's philosophy. Its negation of *all* historical religion—or objective knowledge of God—was so far qualified as regards Christianity, that this religion—viewed on the ethical side—was accepted as including a system of divine moral teaching, such as is urgently demanded by the character and circumstances of the human race. Yet on the side of this religion—said Kant—there exists no evidence for our intellect. We can say only of such an "ideal" as is made manifest in the person of Christ—"may it live in the hearts of men as a power that shall attract to itself, and transmute into its own nature, the souls of mankind!" But we know nothing of moral power apart from a will, and nothing of a will apart from personal existence. More need not be added; for a rather full account has been given of Kant's scepticism (pp. 164-76). This among all forms of modern unbelief may be called the most respectful.

After the time of Kant, his disciple, a man of deeper and more earnest feeling—Fichte—led partly by his sympathy with national sorrows, renounced so far the pride of his earlier philosophy, that he recognized in Christ the founder of the Kingdom of Heaven—the ethical creator of a new humanity. "The lapse of time"—said Fichte—"serves only to confirm the everlasting miracle, that in all who come unto God through Christ Jesus a new heart is created; and until time expires, all who enter into the Kingdom must come unto God by him (Christ); and until the end of time, all who truly know themselves in their relation to him, will bow down with profound reverence to acknowledge the incomparable glory of his manifestation. In his life heaven is opened, and by him has been proclaimed, for all mankind, the freedom of the reign of God" (pp. 192-3). To this

conclusion Fichte was led—as we have said—partly by the events of the time 1808-13; but especially by his study of the fourth Gospel; and it is noticeable that this Gospel was soon afterwards made the especial subject of destructive criticism. The confession made by Fichte was one of many signs indicating a disposition more or less favourable, as regards a return toward Christian faith. Other evidences of the same change of sentiment are seen in the literature of the “Romantic School,” and here and there in the latest writings of Goethe (pp. 295-9). The reaction in favour of the Christian faith was, however, made more clearly apparent in the later writings of Schleiermacher—1821-31—above all in his course of lectures on Christology (pp. 443-8). It is especially against the central doctrine of these lectures that the ponderous criticism of Baur and his followers has been directed. Their “system”—the latest and most elaborate of all forms in which modern unbelief has been propounded—is in the first place negative to a vast extent, but has a quasi-historical form of construction, and is supposed to be built on a philosophical principle—that which has already been defined as the second or middle interpretation of Hegel’s logic (pp. 426-7). In passing, it may be noticed, that the writer does not accept this interpretation as correct; however, it has now been made dominant.

The philosophical basis of the Tübingen School is briefly this:—Religion is immanent in human nature; that is to say, the ideas for which we suppose ourselves to be indebted to divine grace and revelation truly belong to ourselves—to the whole human race. There have been certain times especially favourable to the self-development of these principles; and of all these times the most remarkable was the earlier part of the first century. The low moral estimate already given of that period (pp. 236-40) though consonant with a vast body of evidence supplied by heathen historians, and confirmed by the testimony of St. Paul (Rom. c. i.), is on the whole rejected as too severe, or as one-sided; at any rate it is left comparatively unnoticed,

or is partly suppressed by the writers who follow Baur, while their utmost industry is employed in the compilation of masses of quasi-historical evidences to show that, at that time, human nature was remarkably well qualified to produce for itself a new religion. Accordingly great importance is ascribed to the philosophy of the Stoics, and still more to the dreamy teaching of Philo—especially his idea of the *λόγος*. This “idea,” we are assured, was made the basis of the fourth Gospel which was first produced (it is said) about the time A.D. 150. Meanwhile, it is added, the great apostle of the Gentiles had constructed “out of his own inner consciousness” a Christology of a very exalted character, which was strongly opposed to the small or “poor” creed of the earliest Christians—the Jewish Christians—who were in fact “Ebionites” (עֲבִיּוֹנִים = “poor”). We are informed, that they did not believe in the divinity of Christ. Out of these several chaotic elements there arose marvellously, about the year 150, the creed of “the Catholic Church!” How?—A reply to this question is afforded by virtue of the philosophical principle—a supposed power that has no more reality than a dream. In order that we may believe in the strength of this principle, it must first of all be well understood that “ideas” have life in themselves; and, like all other living things, they have of course a power of self-development. This power has a mode of operation—a wearisome and monotonous routine—that may be explained as easily as the working of a machine. No sooner has an “idea” unfolded itself, or asserted a life of its own, than it calls up or provokes to action some counter-idea. Warfare follows of course, and the end of it is, that the stronger idea takes out of the weaker such energy as this might once possess, and thus the former enriches and invigorates its own life. The life of the Church has consisted—we are told—of a series of such ideal conflicts. The latest is that now maintained between the “system” itself and positive Christianity. From all this it follows, that histories of persons, however eminent, have comparatively

but little importance. In the history of the Church, the name of St. Paul must indeed remain prominent, because he was the earliest expositor of the universal or catholic "idea," of which, however, a full and clear exposition is given only in the writings of Baur and his followers. They know clearly what the apostle saw, but "as in a glass darkly." The oracular style of these few sentences is representative of that mostly prevalent among the biblical critics who represent the system. On several points they have among themselves differences not inconsiderable; but they mostly agree in one conclusion—that Christianity is the result of the ideal process already defined, and that its true beginning must be ascribed to a time not earlier than A.D. 150. About this time the doctrine of the *λόγος* was united with historical belief in Christ. Such narrow notions as had been held by the Ebionites were rejected; and these people, who had formerly been classed with Jewish Christians, were now called heretics. Meanwhile the particularism of Jewish Christianity and its adherence to the law had been overcome by the Pauline doctrine of grace for all mankind. Such was the result, we are told, of a development of ideas. But what is there said of the power by which the whole movement, as here supposed, was begun and sustained?

That a faith may be followed by a philosophy—by some endeavour to understand what we already believe—is obvious; but how can a philosophy produce a faith? To say nothing here of religion—now when political society has long existed, we are still far from coming to an intellectual agreement respecting its origin; but this we know, that it was not founded in ideas, but in feelings or instincts—living powers that can move individuals, families, and tribes—powers that, when acting with full energy, can make a vast army move as one man. Wonderful this may be called; and nature, gravitation, the forces moving in vegetation, in meteorology, animal life, and on a higher scale, those that control our own lower instincts, and lead us to

unselfish ethical feeling and action, to pure friendship, to self-sacrifice, to adoration—these powers are also marvellous, if the word is to be used so freely as to mark everything that cannot be measured by the understanding. Then why are we asked to accept, as the origin of the Christian faith, a hard, intellectual “system,” with nothing but “absolute logic,” to serve instead of both heart and head?—

If instead of a few paragraphs many more volumes could be written in opposition to the teaching of the Tübingen School, its adherents would still regard as safe their own voluminous superstructure, consisting of enormous piles of biblical-historical criticism and treatises on speculative philosophy. To notice their numerous writings, and pay some fair regard to their relative degrees of importance, would be a very difficult task; one demanding great resources of learning, and abundant leisure. It may, however, be possible to give some clear account of their first principles, or the data assumed on their side as self-evident or highly probable. These constitute the basis of their whole superstructure, and if this basis is weak or false, then the higher the tower thereon built, the sooner will it fall to the ground. There may now be cited, in the form of a brief abstract, the account given by Baur himself respecting the origin of our faith. He first assumes as granted a rejection of all that is supernatural, or transcends the limitations of our human faculties. It is, however, admitted that, *in the early history of the Church, are found several indisputable facts of which no rationalistic account can be given*; and these are facts of the highest importance. The substance of Christianity—it is said—is the morality taught in the Sermon on the Mount; yet it is granted that this moral teaching would have remained inoperative, if Jesus of Nazareth had not been accepted by his disciples as the Messiah so long expected. Their faith remained, comparatively speaking, untried so long as he was living among them. It was at least possible—says Baur—that its character might be so far misunderstood, that a faith intended to

become universal might be made national or particularistic. This danger was set aside by the fact of his death. The faith of which Christ was the centre could now no longer be viewed as a new expression of ideas that still belonged to Judaism. It was impossible for Jews to believe in a Messiah who had suffered death by crucifixion. These are some of the first data assumed by Baur. He proceeds, however, to show that the religion of the Early Church, established in Jerusalem, *was* nevertheless to a large extent Jewish, and that its view of the Messiah was mostly that which—as ascribed to the Ebionites of a later time—was called heretical. The difficulties here suggested must be left awhile unnoticed, while other data or supposed facts are stated—partly in Baur's own words.

“Never”—he says—“was an apparent defeat so surely made a victory as by the death of Jesus.” Faith in him must now die with him ; or must rise into a higher life, and put forth a greater energy. “What the resurrection was in itself is a question that lies beyond the circle of historical inquiry ; but this is most certain, that, in the consciousness of his disciples, it had all the firmness of a sure historical fact, and by this fact there was supplied a basis for the development of the new faith.” In passing it may be noticed, how barely the critic abbreviates the facts he gives, and how quietly he suppresses others of which he is well informed. The faith of which he speaks was immediately followed by a divine impulse of a most extraordinary character—an impulse that defies every attempt to describe it. For it would be mere feebleness to speak of a widely and swiftly-spreading electric thrill, pervading the souls of multitudes [including even many like those defined in 1 Cor. 6, 9-11] or of a consciousness of exalted spiritual power ; or of a suddenly-developed courage, before which the world itself was made to shrink into insignificance. “The fact,”—says Baur—“that after the death of their Lord, the disciples did not flee away from Jerusalem, or assemble in any remote place, shows great strength of faith and increase of

heir confidence in the cause of Jesus." Here he writes "death," where "resurrection" would be the true word. In another place he admits, that over the interval elapsing between the former event and the latter there is spread a veil—we know nothing of it. The disciples' faith in the resurrection—so the critic now goes on to say—was their source of strength. This faith might, he adds, afterwards become mingled with Jewish notions; and in the second coming of the Lord a Messiah of a national type might be once more expected. The universal character of the religion to be spread throughout the world might thus be forgotten, or might be greatly contracted. Here Baur suggests the notion, that the new religion might soon fall back into a form of Judaism. But such retrogression—he adds—was soon made impossible by an event of the highest importance—the conversion of Saul, afterwards known as St. Paul. His teaching—says the critic—"made a new beginning in the development of Christianity." The process of his conversion is next described as "a mystery of which neither a psychological, nor a dialectical analysis can be given. At once God revealed in him his Son" [Jesus]. . . . "For the conversion of Saul"—thus Baur continues—"what cause can be assigned save the mighty impulse communicated to him, when suddenly that one great fact—the death of Jesus—was as it were made manifest in his inmost soul?" It is added, that "it was but natural that, as Saul had been a violent persecutor, so now he should become a zealous Christian;" and it is especially noticed, that at once he was converted and made an apostle. Next follows some account of his early labours, his originality, and his independence—the latter asserted especially in the case of his dispute with St. Peter. This controversy is described as an event so important, that its issue must be regarded as the true beginning of Christianity. The religion of the Jewish Christians—including "the earlier apostles"—was, says Baur, but narrow and sectarian, and as regards faith in the Messiah, might be called Ebionite, until the time when

St. Paul's teaching—described as mainly *his own*—obtained in the Church a predominant position. About the same time the doctrine of the λόγος was more distinctly accepted in union with an historical belief in Christ's humanity ; and thus, it is said, was established—in the latter half of the second century—a religion that, as regards its essential ideas, is catholic and final.

The final aim of the system may now be briefly indicated. It is now required—thus we are instructed—that our faith should be understood in a philosophical way. Its essential ideas may be still retained, it is said, although we reject that one article of our faith that has been regarded by the Church, in all ages, as the centre and substance of the Christian Religion. The Church—it is said—has developed her faith in Christ, and by means of this development, has greatly enlarged and elevated our own ethical capacity, and our philosophy of humanity. We now see in revelation the development of reason—in which a human element and a divine are always united—and thus we are led back, by all the elaborate criticism of Baur, to a conclusion not unlike that arrived at by the gnosticism of the second century. The end is accordant with the beginning. First of all we are taught, that the truth, once accepted as a revelation, naturally grew up out of Judaism and philosophy. Last of all we learn, that religion now must die, and philosophy must take its place.

In accordance with this vain and most presumptuous teaching, there follows an idea—often suggested by certain writers—an idea so far opposite to all religious sentiment, that one might willingly leave it unnoticed, or undefined ; and yet it must be named, if a fair account is to be given of the “ system ” and its ultimate tendency. The thankfulness and the adoration of Christians who, in all stages of their spiritual growth, remain still conscious of their dependence ; these are defined as due to the development of their own reason ; or to an impersonal evolution of ideas—a power of which the source is immanent in ourselves—and are not to

be regarded as rightfully due to One who has "called us out of darkness into light." The error is Titanic. It seems to be implied that faith is a loss—a sacrifice of something that belongs to ourselves. There can hardly exist a thought more remote from that childlike faith which is the essence of religion.

As regards its large library filled with biblical-historical criticism and speculative philosophy—all produced in support of the "system"—the Tübingen School must be viewed as a gigantic institute for the spread of unbelief. Its ponderous masses of erudition supply the data and the reasonings that serve mostly as an armoury for antichristian writers, in England and France, as well as in Germany. Nothing is easier now than to make a show of biblical-historical learning, when the object is to reduce Christian belief to a pile of ruins.

For more than a century, numerous professors of biblical history, criticism and theology have treated their own professed faith as if it were but a dead body on which experiments might be tried. They have dissected or torn to pieces almost every book of the New Testament. To a very large extent, the reasonings of these critics consist of wranglings about probabilities. Among themselves they can rarely agree. In the "Tübingen School" itself, Baur's dates of the canonical writings of the New Testament have not been generally accepted as correct. There are critics in this school who assign to the first century some parts of the canon that Baur assigns to the second. There is at least one disciple who has lately shown a wish to turn his back upon the school.* The consequence is that he is regarded as a scholar "whose judgment is not clear." These are but items in an unending series of differences, such as might have been for Semler so many more demonstrations of his own proposition—"no two men can have the same religion" (pp. 49-51). To give a fair account of all the process of

* Hilgenfeld. "Historisch-kritische Einleitung *as neue Testament*" (1876).

destruction—called “biblical-historical criticism”—this would be a task as difficult as to define on a chart every tack in Satan’s voyage through chaos, as described by Milton.

It might naturally be supposed, that the criticism of Baur would hardly affect the minds of the common people; but the fact is that it has been made popular by means of cheap serials, magazine papers, and hastily-written reviews. In such forms as these, his results are often given with exaggeration. The literary history of the Early Church is a study especially demanding caution; and inevitably suggests certain large questions respecting which men of considerable learning fail to see alike. There are chiefly three distinct questions to be considered. One relates to the existence of gospels mostly and formally identical with those now accepted as canonical. The second question relates to substantial concord as existing in the gospels, epistles, and “memoirs of the apostles” known before 150. The third question relates to the character of the Christology then prevalent. In the study of this third question, it is especially important that the value of indirect evidence should be duly considered. Here it is *often*—not to say generally—more powerful than direct assertion.

But why should any suggestions like these be intruded on the notice of men who are still numbered with those whom we must call destructive critics? It is too late. They—not without aid from other quarters—have done their work; have destroyed the religion once existing among millions of the people. And what is there given as a substitute for the faith destroyed? A something shapeless as the aspect ascribed to Death himself by the poet already named. Since Semler’s day, the course of negation has been a rapid descent on a slope of ice. One thinks he will stand firmly on a narrow shelf which he calls his own “ideal Paulinism,” while another will go down only just as far as “deism;” but gravitation will assert its force, and they must both go down to the bottom, which is atheism.

Facts have warranted this view of the case. It was once held as good "logic" that ideas and facts must agree; a supernatural revelation had been required—it was said—and had been granted. This was once accepted as good philosophy. Then came two writers—Biedermann and Pfeiderer—showing how we must be careful to observe, that the revelation talked of after all never did take place in such a form as that in which millions of Christians believe. There can be nothing better than the old-fashioned way of showing men the very essence of religion, as it were embodied, and made clear for the good of all men—thus Pfeiderer writes in effect—but in accordance with the demands of his "absolute logic," he adds, that if the gospel is to be preached sometimes in that way, it can be allowed only as a temporary expedient *ad populum captandum*.

Another writer—Lipsius—gives us a something to serve instead of a faith, an idealism of which the basis is Kant's teaching. Next comes a renowned pessimist critic,* who exposes the error of making any idealism—absolute or subjective—a representative of the Christian faith. This faith he goes on to say is now defunct; its ethical teaching, once admired, is at the best merely external or formal, and does not reach the hearts of men. [These sayings are really the critic's own.] Instead of that faith, he now undertakes to say, that he will soon produce and evolve "a principle" that will in future serve "better than Christianity" to inspire and direct ethically the whole body of the human race. The intention is large; but we fear that sufficient time will hardly be allowed for such a performance as here is promised. In Berlin changes of theory must now-a-days be "sensational." Idealism has been slain, and is buried by pessimism; and now appears the latest novelty in the shape of that very old enemy—materialism. Our human "consciousness," of which so much has been said by idealists and pessimists, is itself—we are told now—nothing more than a delusion. All those actions of our brains that

* Ed. von Hartmann; "Der Krisis des Christenthums" (1881).

once were ascribed to divine influence are simply the results of changes taking place in molecules. Matter is all. Everything is material. Man is a bundle of sensations. He works like an automaton, and cannot sin; for matter never sins.

This is the result. Here is the substitute for the faith destroyed. It is not mere declamation, but sober truth, when it is asserted, that every word that can be said against Christianity has been said and repeated *usque ad nauseam* in Berlin; but that now the social principles and movements there most dreaded, are so dreaded especially because they are irreligious. Given Christian faith, love and hope—we would add patience—as still existing; then possibly the formidable social democracy of our day might be controlled and well directed. Of the actual case existing it is not ours to judge. We have already contended at length (pp. 168-73) that we can have no social order without true ethics, and no true ethics without the Christian religion. Having made ourselves responsible for the truth of these sequences, we must not undertake further to show how far they are accordant with the facts—social and political—made especially prominent in our own day.

To depict fairly the condition of Germany in the present age, is a task requiring clear observation and careful discrimination. There are evils and dangers there existing of which the source is far older than the rationalism of our century, or that preceding ours. For a long time now, there has existed—not in Germany alone—a divorce between faith and life, of which the results are now making themselves more and more apparent. Logic has not done *all* the mischief. The destructive criticism of Baur and his school has made a climax; but this is only one of the bad results of an intellectual sort of credence. Of other results the general character has been well intimated, by means of familiar terms:—"These Germans believe with their heads; that is to say, they do not believe at all." This well describes the creed or no-creed of many learned critics.

Against *them*, with all their voluminous libraries—the shelves bending under loads of erudition—it would be presumptuous to contend; so firm is their faith in their own logic. Their results are for the most part re-assertions of their first principles; and of these the chief is an utter rejection of all belief belonging to a supernatural order. Nothing is more characteristic of German sages, specialists, and philosophers than their contempt of the multitudes left destitute of means for obtaining erudition. In the field of classic scholarship, this pride of professorship might have some appropriateness of character; but it is altogether out of place where we have to treat of the Christian faith. It betrays ignorance of the worst sort.

Respect is due to the intellectual powers of great critics, though their trust in their own wisdom sometimes leads them too far; but higher respect is due to the faith of the heart, the sound ethical feeling—in a word, the religion—on which the welfare of millions of men, women and children has always been dependent—the faith that once made millions accept with thankfulness this life with all its sorrows. This faith must not be surrendered in obedience to Baur's system; nor on the other hand need it be defended by special refutation of every part of his fallacies.

Everywhere in the "system" we are brought into collision with discrepancies or discords described as existing in the Early Church. One might be induced to suppose, that the whole Christian literature of the first two centuries consisted of a mere series of discordant doctrines. We shall, nevertheless, be able to show how, on most important questions, concordant expressions are predominant; and especially where they serve to confirm our belief—that the Christology of that time was *true*; was accordant not only with our Lord's own declarations, but also with the teaching of St. Paul's chief epistles, the other epistles, the four Gospels, the Apocalypse, and the writings of the apostolic fathers.

CHAPTER XIX.

CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES.

How will the long controversy be ended?—The question is suggested; but merely with this intention—that everything like such presumption as would attempt an answer may here be disowned. The issue belongs to the future, and lies far beyond the reach of our understanding; but ours is the responsibility of taking a part on one side or the other. Neutrality is not possible. We have no such liberty as is sometimes imagined to exist—a liberty of holding an intermediate position between belief and unbelief. This has been made clear by the “system” of which an account has been given. It is a modern gnosis, that would put ideas in the place of facts, and would separate from Christ his own Church. It is impossible.

On the side of Christianity, the results of modern controversy are especially remarkable when we notice the numerous books written lately on Christology and on the history of the Early Church. They are in many instances so valuable, that to notice them briefly would be an injustice. Of their general conclusions a word may be said.

There existed in the Early Church—before A.D. 58—a presence, a power, never before made manifest in human nature; accordingly there went forth thence an influence of faith, love, and hope by which the world was afterwards overcome. This influence was not uniformly sustained throughout the period. Its more powerful manifestation is seen in the writings of St. Paul—dated before A.D. 60—and something that may be called a “remission” of fervour may be found in certain patristic writings of the second

century. In treating these writings as evidential respecting the Christology of their period, sound learning and keen insight are especially demanded in every critic who would fairly represent the truth. For critics of another school, here is a department of study, where apparent contradictions may often be found, while deep concords are left unnoticed. A perverse ingenuity may here find partial evidence, to show how the writings of St. Paul were despised, or were even unknown. Thus for example, much may be said of Hegesippus (A.D. 150) and his supposed "Ebionite views;" and meanwhile Clement of Rome (A.D. 100) and his "Epistle to the Corinthians"—so well accordant with Pauline teaching—may be left in the shade. This indicates but one of many instances where, by means of partial evidence, an erroneous conclusion may be stated so as to seem well founded on historical facts.

Respecting the chief result of the system—a so-called "historical" separation made between Christ and his Church—there is one fact that should be especially noticed. It should be deeply studied; for although well known, it is not generally well understood. The early fathers were not theorists. They felt, believed, and knew far more than they could put into a systematic form; and when they were telling one part of the truth, they did not suppose that silence respecting another part would be viewed as equivalent to denial. They believed in many instances more than their writings directly asserted. The divinity of their Lord united with his humanity—this was the truth that was often implied when not directly expressed. Belief of this truth was the life and power of the Church. It was one belief in one Lord. The apostolic fathers did not, for the most part, care to inquire how their faith might be analyzed, so that it might be described as consisting of two beliefs; nor how these two might be harmonized, so as to appear *again* as one. To these metaphysical questions their faithful successors were urged by the assaults of heresies. On one side the Church had those who more or less distinctly

denied the divinity; on the other, those who denied the humanity of our Lord; and guided by his own wisdom, she more and more distinctly—that is to say, with greater dialectic clearness—asserted the truth that had been held from the beginning. It was not more fully asserted, but was more distinctly shown. There was nothing new in it, save the mode of exposition. In the days of the Early Church, the mind of man, though permeated by the Holy Spirit, had the same nature that it has now. Faith comes first, and includes in its grasp all that the intellect has afterwards to unfold out of that faith. The faith of the early fathers seems here and there to be involved in some obscurity, and is sometimes, as we have said, implied rather than expressed. Thus lies in the earth and in obscurity—for a time—the bulb out of which a flower arises; yet the bulb and the flower are one. The oak is in the acorn.

The Christians who lived in the first hundred years after the Resurrection were, for the most part, practical men—"witnesses"—and held firmly the substance of the same faith that, in later days, was expounded in a more systematic form. Their "*regula fidei*" (rule of faith) was so far trusted, that they were not at all anxious to define strictly a canon of the writings containing records of the faith cherished as apostolical. Justin Martyr for example (150) mentions "Gospels" and "Memoirs of the Apostles," as affording the "lessons" read on Sundays in churches in his time, as in the time preceding; and it is clear that these writings called "Gospels" and "Memoirs" did, in numerous instances, contain records identical with those still preserved in our four Gospels; yet the father does not tell us enough to prevent modern disputations respecting the extent of the correspondence existing between his "Gospels" and those now accepted as canonical. The epistles of St. Paul are not named by Justin; yet how can we doubt the fact that he was well acquainted with them? His teaching respecting the Word (*λόγος*) especially deserves study, as illustrative of the distinction to be made between implicit faith and

knowledge, on the one hand, and explicit or systematic theory on the other. By means of confusion made on this point, gross errors have been widely spread respecting the facts of early Christianity. It has been said, for instance—and with some plausible show of learning—that in Justin's time, such teaching as his own, respecting the doctrine of the λόγος, was altogether "new." This is a false representation, as might be shown by several facts, of which only one can here be named. Justin, in illustration of his doctrine, borrows an image from the action of fire. "From one fire," he says, "another is kindled, and again another; and yet the first is not thereby diminished; and this teaching," he adds, "*has been delivered to me.*"

Enough has been said to make clear these facts:—For those who are contentious the history of the Early Church can afford abundant materials of controversy, such as have been compiled by Semler (p. 51) and in later days by his successor Baur (232-6). Such questions as those which they have made so prominent may be multiplied to any extent desired; but however so multiplied, they will not affect the central truth cherished as the heart of the Church throughout the first two centuries, and subsequently more strictly defined. Faith in Christ—true God and true man—was the centre, the soul, of the belief established in the several churches of Jerusalem, Rome, Corinth and Galatia, at a time, to say the least, as early as A.D. 58; that is to say, about twenty-five years after the Resurrection. For proof of this, nothing more is required than the evidence supplied by four epistles written by St. Paul—one to the Romans, another to the Galatians, and two to the Corinthians—those epistles of which no educated unbeliever doubts the genuineness. The apostle here takes it for granted, that Christians—though still liable to error on subordinate subjects—required now (in A.D. 55-8) no further instruction respecting the central ground of their faith; that is to say, their belief in the divinity and the supremacy of their Lord. That faith was already well established; and yet they must be reproved.

For what reason?—Because, while they all believed in that central truth, they did not all understand its relations. They did not see the conclusions to which it should lead them. At Corinth the church included too many whose disposition was contentious and sectarian. They did not know how large a sacrifice of their particular tendencies was demanded by the faith they professed. St. Paul wrestled with their errors, and eventually gained a victory.

For some time afterwards the church at Corinth had rest; and the ethics belonging to their Christian faith adorned the lives of many believers. This we learn from the epistle addressed to them by Clement, writing from Rome soon after A.D. 90. After commendation of their former faith and obedience—especially their charity—he deplores the fact, that once more they were lapsed into the same practical errors that had been reproved by St. Paul in his two epistles to the Corinthians. Now as before, it is not said that any change had taken place in the substance of their faith. In this respect they were still Christians; but the fact is deplored, that they were not living in accordance with their faith. Again, insubordination, levity of demeanour—above all, pride and self-conceit—were prevalent at Corinth, as in the days when the love and patience of St. Paul were severely tried. And how are these errors now reproved? In a tone perfectly consonant with St. Paul's—firm and dignified, yet gentle and benevolent—expressing, not here and there, or in any formal proposition, but throughout, and in every sentence, the faith and love of a Christian. “Our pride”—says the writer of this epistle—“dies away while we dwell in contemplation of Christ's suffering. To have constantly before our eyes the death of our Lord—this is the sign of a Christian; this the means by which he is led to repentance and obedience.” These, like many other passages in the same epistle, are fair examples of numerous concords found in the writings of the apostolic fathers, and too often left unnoticed by critics of the destructive class. They have examined minutely every

word in this epistle, to find here, if possible, some instance of divergence from the teaching of St. Paul. There can hardly be suggested a doubt respecting the fact, that in Rome he suffered martyrdom in A.D. 64. Six years before this time, he had addressed to the church in Rome—which he had not planted, and had not visited—an epistle containing a most exalted Christology. It was herein taken for granted, that his doctrine respecting the person and the work of Christ required no proof, but had already been accepted and was established among the Christians dwelling at Rome.

A study of Christian evidences can hardly begin in a better way than by means of comparing with the teaching of Paul, in A.D. 58, the teaching of Clement, about the time A.D. 95. The apostle thus begins his epistle:—"Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God . . . concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead: by whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name: among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ: to all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ." In the fifth and sixth chapters of the epistle, the writer assumes that the facts of Christ's vicarious sufferings and death are already well known and believed by those whom he addresses, and he now proceeds to show the results that should follow their faith:—"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.

Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin, for he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him : knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more, death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once, but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord."—(Rom. vi. 3-11.)

This passage might be cited, with others, to establish the fact, that the Church was based on the truth of the Resurrection ; but here we have to notice chiefly one trait in the teaching of St. Paul—the predominance of one idea. Again and again we find it expressed in such passages as the following :—

"I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." . . . "Other ground can no man lay than that *is laid*, which is Jesus Christ." . . . "Ye are the body of Christ." . . . "He that regardeth the day [the sabbath, etc.] regardeth it unto the Lord ; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks ; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks. For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord ; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord : whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living. But why dost thou judge thy brother ? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother ? for we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. For it is written, 'As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.'"

It will on every side be granted that the texts quoted

have not been selected as those which most briefly, clearly, and emphatically assert the divinity of our Lord. Of such passages as have been noticed, where one line is given, a page might—would space allow—as easily be given; or, if we could here include among our authorities the whole literature of the Church in the first two centuries, then instead of each line a volume might be given. The cited passages—if adduced in evidence of our Lord's divinity—may be called indirect. Are they, because they are indirect, less powerful? In our own daily conversation do we, in any direct way, repeat often that which is already known to those with whom we converse? Do we tell them that the sun is shining; or that the sun is the source of light; or that we feel assured our life could not be sustained without the sun's influence? On these points we are all mostly silent, because we all are agreed. Now faith in Christ was the light of life for St. Paul, and for those to whom his epistles were addressed. Consequently, he reminds them often of their faith, he speaks of the consequences that should flow from it; but for the most part he does not assert formally or endeavour to confirm the historical facts on which that faith was grounded. An exception—one highly remarkable—does indeed exist; but it is an exception that will prove the rule (1 Cor. xi. 23-32). Here facts that had been "delivered" to them are solemnly repeated. Among the Corinthians were some whose conduct might imply that the facts had been forgotten.

The apostle, writing about twenty-five years after the Resurrection, assumes that there existed *then* in the Church the one true Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is further taken for granted, that the doctrine and practical guidance given in his epistles will be found accordant with the facts declared in that Gospel—that living record of Christ which *then* was so clear, so true, and vivid, that we use but a feeble word when we call it a "portraiture." For the most part its prominent traits are supposed as well known, or are named only in order to give force to the apostle's exhortations,

which may all be reduced to one—that those whom he addresses should “walk” (that is to say, live and act) in accordance with their faith. This is otherwise expressed as living in agreement with the Gospel preached by the apostle; but is especially defined as dying and living with Christ.

The character of St. Paul himself might with great advantage be first considered by those who would study Christian Evidences in their true order. It is in defiance of his own express declarations—often in effect repeated—that he has been described by modern Ebionites as a teacher of “new” doctrines. That which he “delivered” he had, as he declares, “received of the Lord.” The apostle was “a burning and shining light;” but—as he assures us everywhere, and with emphasis almost excessive—he shines with a reflected light, and spreads round him a fire kindled by a central Sun. Nothing is so often expressed by St. Paul as his sense of dependence on Christ. The image of “a reflected light” is feeble; the apostle makes his whole mind and soul a clear glass, through which we behold the Sun himself. When the name of St. Paul is repeated, we have in a nucleus a full refutation of Ebionite errors, ancient and modern. No small belief of the kind so named can harmonize with the adoration of his Lord, everywhere expressed or implied in the writings of St. Paul. Their energy and fervour are everywhere traits belonging especially to the author; but their substantial teaching is accordant with the faith of the Early Church. The importance of this conclusion; the vast array of perverse learning and so-called “logic” that may be set up against it; the difficulties that must still exist, though evidence on the side of faith is predominant—these matters for serious consideration are not neglected when our deliberate conviction is here declared. The faith of St. Paul and of the Church to which he belonged was *not* Ebionite; was not a faith that had its source and authority in one who, however wise and good, was only a man. “That eternal life”—says St. John

—"that was with the Father, and was manifested unto us, which was from the beginning, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you"—and what is the declaration that follows? One that, so far as a mere style of writing is concerned, differs widely from St. Paul's, but remains in substance identical. And this union of difference and identity is seen in all the literature of the Early Church, including the writings contained in the New Testament, and those of the apostolical fathers. During the time A.D. 58-150 the Church had for the most part a practical tendency, and was not anxious to reconcile with metaphysical reasoning the faith delivered to the saints. Accordingly it was not largely developed, but was *on the whole* faithfully maintained. To make this clear, the writings named below should be studied. No endeavour should be made to find here either exact concords, on one side, or on the other such minor discrepancies as may easily be discovered.

It will be well to consider first the evidences afforded by St. Paul's four epistles, addressed respectively, one to the Romans, two to the Corinthians, and one to the Galatians. It will not be difficult to show that, as regards especially their Christology, these four epistles agree with the others included in the canon; also with the Apocalypse, and with the four Gospels.*

* Here should be noticed—as especially original and forcible in their treatment of the evidences afforded by St. Paul's epistles—the following two works by the Rev. C. A. Row:—

"The Jesus of the Evangelists: his historical character vindicated; or an examination of the internal evidence of our Lord's divine mission" (second edition, 1881).

"Christian Evidences, viewed in relation to modern thought" (the Bampton Lectures for 1877, third edition, 1881).

A compendious view of early patristic evidence in Christology may be found in the following work, of which an English translation exists:—"Die Lehre von der Person Christi;" von J. A. Dorner, 2 vols. 1845, etc.

Next should be noticed the evidence afforded by the early patristic writings of Clement (of Rome), Ignatius, Barnabas, Polycarp, Hermas, Papias and Hegisippus. In addition the writings of Justin and Irenæus might also be studied with advantage.

Early ritualism; records of early martyrdom, and such assaults as were made by Celsus and others against the Church, may also be studied with advantage.

There remains to be noticed a series of facts attending early persecutions of Christians. The imperial policy of Rome granted toleration to many sects and superstitions. Why then were Christians so fiercely persecuted? This is a question that may be answered so as to impute gross exaggeration to certain records of persecution; but careful research may lead us to a different conclusion. First of all should be well understood the character of current Roman notions respecting the faith and the general intention of Christians. These notions were indeed absurd; but nevertheless they were such as now afford clear evidence of the faith then really held by those persecuted. They maintained the truth of Christ's divinity and supremacy. That he was Lord of all men and would finally judge the world—this they steadfastly believed. Their belief on this point was viewed as having intentionally a secular and political application. Accordingly Christians were mainly accused of one crime—"crimen (læsæ) majestatis"—that which, in the language of the present day, would be held tantamount to "high treason." There had long existed strict Roman laws—for the most part held in abeyance—and these laws were now revived, and in their utmost rigour were put in force, in order that the spread of the Christian faith might be stayed. The empire could tolerate the presence of "gods many" and "lords many;" but could not tolerate the faith maintained by Christians—to speak more strictly, the central tenet of their faith. Among the charges preferred against them were impiety, superstition, unlawful assemblage, and the use of magic. Against the offences so designated laws

had been enacted, and still existed; but they were allowed to remain mostly inactive, as in the toleration of many Jews living in the Transtiberine district of Rome, for some fifty years before the Christian Era. Why then were Christians so bitterly persecuted? The true ground of the hatred excited against them, and of their consequent sufferings through persecution, was their faith. They adored Christ as their Lord. This was both seen and felt by the heathen, even where they were not clearly or exactly informed of the truth. Their ready inference was this—that men who adored as their Lord one who had suffered crucifixion must be misanthropic and disloyal. The inference was false; the fact that Christ was adored remains true.

Some few remarks may be added, to indicate the character of those concords of testimony with which the above-named writings abound. As already stated there can hardly be made a better beginning than by a study of St. Paul's own character. He is permeated, inspired and controlled by one divine presence. The power of attraction to which he ascribes his conversion, and the subsequent devotion of his life to Christ, is obviously superhuman. "I live," he says, "yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. . . . Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ. . . . I beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ. . . . We have the mind of Christ." . . . "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." These few texts, copied with but slight care of selection, are given only as fair examples of a numerous series, all tending to one conclusion—that the apostle recognized no authority higher than that of Jesus Christ. Instead of giving as evidences a few texts, taken from several epistles, we would refer chiefly to the general tenor of the epistles themselves, or would take as evidences passages each long enough to include several chapters of our English version; for example, 1 Cor. c. 1-5. In the fifth of these consecutive chapters, there may be noticed

especially the fact that the writer ascribes to our Lord absolute power and authority, to save or to condemn. This passage is remarkable; still it is but one of many having the same general tenor.* Christ forgives sins. He places himself above the holiest of all preceding teachers and prophets. All power is given unto him. He wages a warfare, not against this or that particular evil, but with the very principle of evil. Every man must rank himself on the side of Christ or in opposition; and the doom of every man will depend on his decision in this respect. This is simply the teaching of the New Testament. Everywhere in the canon, as in early patristic writings, the supremacy of one Lord is maintained less directly, as in the epistle of St. James and in some parts of the synoptic gospels, or more directly, as in the fourth gospel and in the epistle to the Colossians; the degrees and modes of declaration are various; but the substance, the truth, is one and the same. There may be found some minor and superficial discrepancies, and doubts may be suggested here and there respecting authorship and dates of writing; but the concord that governs the whole of the canonical scriptures is large, deep and strong.

The Church was not established on philosophy; but from the first consisted of a union of souls all attracted toward one centre by one divine power. If there is one series of facts left sure in the whole range of history it is that series of which the result was the Church of Christ. At the time of its formation there was developed a power spiritual and real, taking possession of the souls and transforming the

* There may be given a few references to represent many:—Matt. iii. 11; x. 34-42; xi. 11, 27-30; xii. 6, 8, 31-32, 41-42; xiii. 38-43; xvi. 16-19; xviii. 20; xxv. 31, 46; xxvi. 13; xxviii. 18-20. Mark ii. 5; xiii. 10, 31. Luke iii. 16; x. 21-24; xi. 14-28; xii. 8, 9. John vi. 41-71; xv. 26; xvi. 7-15; xvii. 20-26. Romans vi. 1-11; viii. 31-39; xiv. 6-18. 1 Cor. x. 4-9; xv. 22, 45; xvi. 22. 2 Cor. v. 10-11, 17-21. Gal. ii. 20; iii. 13-29; iv. 4-7. 1 Peter i. 10-21; ii. 21-25. 1 John i. 1-7. Rev. v. 1-14; vii. 10-17.

lives of multitudes; and the source of this power was simply love of one Person—an adoring and devoted love, expressed in such language as never before had been uttered (Rom. viii. 31-39). The apostle who wrote the passage referred to has in his several epistles established the truth that, at the time of his writing—A.D. 58—one common portraiture of their Lord was as it were stereotyped on the hearts of Christians in Jerusalem, Rome, Antioch, Corinth and other places. In some parts his letters are strongly controversial, and show clearly—first that personal prejudices against himself existed; secondly that dissensions had arisen respecting the observance of certain rites or institutions. His chief aim everywhere is to show not so much that this observance is erroneous; but that it is nothing as compared with the love of Christ, which—as is constantly taken for granted—is known already among all the churches as their one bond of union. These few words summarize the substantial contents, not of a few texts consisting of sentences or short paragraphs, but of a whole series of epistles. St. Paul assumes the fact, that the churches addressed have already a true faith, and then goes on to show that they do not all see clearly enough the comprehensive character of the religion to which their faith should lead them. Their faith is true; but is still encumbered with certain vestiges of Judaism.

The Church already established at Rome some years before A.D. 58, included Christians who had come from Jerusalem; and on the ground of this fact it has been said, that Roman Christians had originally no faith larger than that which has been called “Ebionite.” This, we are told, was opposed to the larger faith of St. Paul. Yet he writes to them (A.D. 58) such words as these:—“We shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God. . . . We being many are one body in Christ.” In the year A.D. 64, the Church at

Rome passed through the terrible persecution under Nero, and not only endured it and survived, but soon afterwards was known everywhere as the home and centre of Christian faith, love and concord. And what was the faith still maintained here, about thirty years after the time of St. Paul? The question is answered by St. Clement, in an epistle of which the date is not later than A.D. 100. It is throughout pervaded by the spirit that animated St. Paul, and is especially remarkable for its gentle and peace-loving tone of exhortation. Christ, says the writer, is our high-priest, who for our salvation has poured out his own blood, who has given his body for our bodies, and his soul for ours. St. Paul speaks of our Lord as a descendant from Israel, "according to the flesh;" exactly so speaks St. Clement, using the word Jacob as synonymous with Israel.* In two forms of doxology the name of Jesus is included (cc. 20, 50). In him, it is said, we have a full revelation and an insight (*γνώσις*) of divine truth; we have immortal life, righteousness, freedom, faith and confidence—all this now; but eye has not seen, ear has not heard, that which he has prepared for those who remain faithful until the full appearing of his kingdom. Meanwhile he is our helper and leader in all our adversities. He is the brightness, the effulgence (*ἀπαύγασμα*) of the divine Majesty, by so much the more exalted above the angels as he has inherited a more glorious name. He is the sceptre-bearer† of God's majesty; yet when he might, without any assumption of a glory not his own, have shone forth in perfect effulgence, he chose rather to appear in the lowliness of self-humiliation (Phil. ii. 5-11). Belief in the pre-existence of Christ is implied (c. 22) where it is said that he spoke, through the Holy Spirit, in the scriptures of the Old Testament. As regards the doctrine of grace, St. Clement, writing about A.D. 100, agrees with St. Paul, writing in A.D. 58. Not by our own wisdom, he says, nor by our pious works, though issuing out of holiness

* ἐξ αὐτοῦ (τοῦ Ἰακώβ) ὁ κύριος Ἰησοῦς τὸ κατὰ σαρκά. c. 49.

† σκηπτρον in the original.

of heart, are we saved, nor in any way by ourselves ; but by God's gracious will (to save us) in Christ, and through faith.

The same faith is declared by Ignatius of Antioch, who suffered martyrdom A.D. 103. He was one whose especial aim was to maintain the unity of the Church, respecting which his views are accordant with the teaching of St. Paul (1 Cor. xii.). Accordingly the divinity and supremacy of Christ are though indirectly still powerfully asserted. The Church, says Ignatius, is a continuation of the life of her Lord, human and divine. His death attracts us into communion with himself, and thus is perpetuated its virtue. We are attracted by his death, so that for us it becomes the source of a new life ; and now his love is our love. In these and similar expressions, contentious critics may find apparent grounds for the remark, that the results that St. Paul ascribes to faith are here ascribed to love ; but the criticism has no value. The aim of Ignatius is practical ; his desire is that the Church should everywhere reflect faithfully the character of her Head, and his exhortations imply a faith that unites him with the apostles St. John and St. Paul. Here as elsewhere, in early patristic writings, one faith respecting the supremacy of Christ is maintained ; sometimes by direct assertion, otherwise as implied in practical admonitions, and thirdly as defended by argument. In fine music passing discords are tolerated, because they are overruled by a predominant concord. Men may be loyal at heart, though they do not always define precisely alike the prerogatives of the sovereign whom they obey. So in the records of the Early Church, one faith is ever present, even when it is not directly expressed.

The teaching of Barnabas is especially Pauline, in the assertion of Christian freedom as regards the institutions of Judaism ; and the source of this freedom, we are told, is found in Christ's sacrifice of himself. By that one full and perfect sacrifice all others are abolished. The New Covenant was foreshadowed in the Old, which now has passed away.

The temple of the Jews is destroyed, and we, in whose hearts he dwells, are now the temple of the Lord. He, the Son of God and Judge of both the living and the dead, could suffer on no other account than for our sakes, in order that by his wounds we might be healed. He is the Lord to whom in the beginning God said, "let us make man in our likeness." From him the prophets derived their inspiration. If he had not appeared incarnate, how could we unconsumed have looked upon him, since we cannot view even the sun, which is his creature, in its full splendour? He has sacrificed for us his own life, that we may have forgiveness of sins and, being sprinkled with his blood, may be sanctified.

These may suffice as examples of the concords found in early patristic writings; and would space permit, it would be easy to go on and show how the same faith that was asserted by Polycarp (A.D. 120) was represented by the "aged man" who conversed with Justin (before A.D. 150); the same faith that was still (in A.D. 180) maintained by Irenæus and, as he tells us, in the several churches (or congregations of believers) then existing. There remain to be noticed briefly concords of testimony still more significant. Those already named relate to one central tenet—Christ's supremacy—but these next to be considered are concordant traits in one portraiture of our Lord. In the three gospels called Synoptic, and in the fourth (which Tübingen critics set apart as belonging to a later time), in the four epistles of St. Paul, dated not after A.D. 60, and in the other epistles, in the Apocalypse, written about A.D. 70, in St. Clement's "Epistle to the Corinthians," and in other patristic writings earlier than A.D. 150—in all these are found the self-same traits of one commanding, self-evidential portraiture, that still retains its brightness, beauty and majesty, after the lapse of more than eighteen hundred years.

"It was reserved," says a modern historian, "for Christianity to present to the world an ideal character, which, through all the changes of eighteen centuries, has

filled the hearts of men with an impassioned love, and has shown itself capable of acting on all ages, nations, temperaments, and conditions; has not only been the highest pattern of virtue, but the highest incentive to its practice, and has exerted so deep an influence that it may be truly said that the simple record of three short years of active life has done more to regenerate and to soften mankind than all the disquisitions of philosophers, and than all the exhortations of moralists. This has indeed been the well-spring of whatever has been best and purest in the Christian life.”*

By whom was the portraiture here called “ideal” produced? By any one man?—Then where and when lived the mighty poet (and far more than a poet) who could create such an ideal? Or was it produced by several contemporaneous authors? How miraculous their concord! Or by several living in various times and places? Their concord must be still more marvellous. But whence came the influence that led multitudes to accept the description as historically true? The word portraiture has been used as familiar and to some degree useful; but it is a feeble word, and hardly serves to indicate the truth. There was recognized in the Christian Churches of St. Paul’s time, and afterwards, the virtual presence of one living Lord, by whose Spirit every doctrine might be judged, to whose life every precept had reference. For proof, were it required, the whole series of the epistles included in the canon of the New Testament might be cited. Those addressed to the Ephesians and the Colossians may be especially named; but only because the truth expressed everywhere is often repeated here with a remarkable energy. It is taken for granted, that one presence pervades every congregation of Christians, and there needs be mentioned only one name to remind them all of their common faith and their practical duties. A word is enough to call to mind all the traits of a portraiture

* W. H. Lecky. “History of Morality from Augustus to Charlemagne,” (1869) vol. ii. p. 8.

that is engraved on every heart. Thus in one place that name serves instead of a summary of doctrine:—"Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken to you the word of God; whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation: Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever."

The strong and clear traits of the portraiture existing, and well known in all Christian Churches in the days of the apostles, have not faded in the lapse of time; but on the contrary have lately been studied with especial attention. We have thus been led to consider more deeply the ethical teaching of Christ; for example the sins that he especially denounced—pride and covetousness. Are not these the sins that have produced a very large share of all the world's misery? On the other side are seen the virtues on which he pronounced his blessings—lowliness, voluntary poverty, self-sacrifice, and beneficence like his own. They are impracticable, we are told; but who has made them impracticable? And what are the results of our worldly wisdom, as opposed to his teaching? What have we to boast of, now that we have gained the whole world? Is it peace? What is there to be gained practically by the abolition of our faith? On the other hand, might not the world be made, comparatively speaking, a Paradise, if our lives could first be made accordant to our faith?

Of all conceivable errors the greatest is our modern error—especially German—which would ascribe to philosophy the origin of our Christian faith. Its true source is found in love—in that superhuman and personal attraction by which St. Paul was overcome, melted down, and transmuted in heart and life. In his case the fact is well known as a marvellous instance of conversion. His fervid eloquence has made it known throughout the whole world. But there lived multitudes of converts in his day; men whose faith and devotion, as deep and sincere as his own, were inspired by the presence of Christ himself; men whose lowly character is suggested by such energetic words as these:—

"Things which are despised hath God chosen, yea and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are." The Church was a union of souls, all attracted by one divine love to one centre. If we seek for some illustration of that power of attraction and cohesion, it will be found in the force of gravitation rather than in the dead thoughts of "vain philosophy." That power was ethical, not intellectual.

The controversy of which some account has been given itself bears witness to the truth. What were Lessing's questions, which have often been named (pp. 3-4, 9, etc.)? In substance this: How can we reject as false a faith of which the ethical character is evidently divine? Let the moral claims of this faith be considered, especially in those moments when our mind and soul are not buried in sensualism, but expanded and purified; in times of affliction; or during recovery from dangerous illness, in moments when we watch beside the death-bed of a friend, or follow his remains to the grave; or in times of public disorder, when the chaotic elements of human nature are disclosed; or when we are called upon to exert our highest moral courage; or lastly at the time when we know that our own death is near—these are the hours when the soul is best prepared to estimate the value of Christian faith. How is it that at these times the words are most welcome: "Come unto me . . . and I will give you rest."

Christianity did not begin in any philosophy, or in any conjunction of philosophies. So grossly overrated have been the various systems of notions so-called, that one may well wish to avoid the use of any words reminding us of their vain pretensions. Yet it must not be supposed for a moment, that the profound yet clear and practical teaching of our Lord has not a corresponding intellectual representation. He loves the presence of children, and lowly disciples whose faith is childlike; and he mostly speaks so that they may understand; but there pervades all his ethical teaching a unity of which the source is an insight

clear as the noonday sun. We may draw a number of circles, each having its own centre; and then we may place them so that the general effect shall present the image of a star—every ray darting forth from one bright centre. So in the teaching of Christ, all the distinct precepts flow from one principle; and the contrasts we observe—such as may be hastily called discords, or even contradictions—when deeply studied, will be understood as so many essential parts of one organism. “Suffer little children to come unto me,” is a beautiful invitation. On the other side, there is severity in the words—often repeated in one form or another—“If any man come to me and hate not his own life, he cannot be my disciple;” yet the kind invitation and the solemn admonition are both expressions of one profound love, and both are perfectly accordant with the whole tenor of Christ’s teaching respecting his own work in the world. He has to gain a victory, not over this or that special vice, but over evil itself, as he declares in a passage deserving our most careful consideration (Luke xi. 14-28). If the teaching given in that passage is well understood, the conclusion will appear as a true result; as a consequence that is inevitable: “He that is not with me is against me.”

Just as the three apostles James, John, and Paul have been set asunder by the error of a mechanical intellect, so one divine saying of their Lord has been set against another. But a deep harmony governs all the tones that blend in the divine and human character of Christ, and in his teaching. We have to contemplate not alone his spotless holiness, but also his self-sacrificing love, if we would see the force of that principal evidence on which the faith of the Church is founded. Modern criticism professes to find errors in the early records of the faith, and to invalidate some parts of the evidence supplied by historical writings belonging to the first two centuries. But there remains to be accounted for the origin of the faith itself. If we reject the testimony of

the Early Church, we find ourselves in presence of a problem of which solution is impossible. The self-evidential presence of our Lord was the life and strength of his Church in her earliest time, when no word of any literary evidence existed; and now, after the lapse of eighteen centuries, the evidence that can win back the world to faith must be a manifestation of that very same power by which the Church was created.



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